R E

R
125

From Aunt Georgia

To

Esther Williams.

Dec 23rd 1905.

Care Notice

Return this book at date in back.

Circulating Library.

# THAT SWEET STORY OF OLD

## MARGARET E. SANGSTER'S IDEAL GIFT BOOKS

**Janet Ward.** A Daughter of the Manse. 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

Although Mrs. Sangster needs no introduction to the literary world, it is to be noted that this is her first venture as a novelist. The interest of this charming romance centers in the clever daughter of a minister. College life, work among the Mountain Whites of Tennessee and College Settlement work in New York give variety to the scenes, and large scope for the study of characteristics and the portrayal of character.

**Winsome Womanhood.** New Large Paper Edition de Luxe, with Illuminated Pages and many Extra Illustrations, 8vo, cloth . . . . . net $2.50.
Popular Edition, 12mo, cloth . $1.25.

"It will find the immediate approval of the feminine heart, for upon each page will be found a dainty reproduction of articles treasured by my lady when she pursues the gentler arts of home-making."—*Outlook.*

"An exquisite book, written in the sweetest spirit, out of the ripest wisdom and the tenderest love. It ought to stand at the very head of all Mrs. Sangster's publications in popularity."—*The Interior.*

**Lyrics of Love** Of Hearth and Home and Field and Garden. Printed in two colors. 12mo, decorated cloth, net $1.25.

"The book is in keeping with the poems, dainty, restful to the eye and comfortable to hold. Soft-tinted paper and quiet yet rich ornamentations make it a most attractive gift book. Among the best of our living poets."—*Boston Traveler.*

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

To Delora Hollsclaw
From
Elsie Alley Williams

BEHOLDING THE STAR

# *That Sweet Story of Old*

## A Life of Christ for the Young

By
MARGARET E. SANGSTER

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1904, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 63 Washington Street
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 30 St. Mary Street

*To*
*Margaret Elizabeth*
*my*
*grandchild and*
*namesake,*
*I dedicate this book*

# Foreword

SEVERAL years ago, a friend suggested that I should write for children and young people, a book that might lead them to study for themselves, lovingly and earnestly, the story of our Saviour's life among men, as it is given us by the four evangelists. At first I hesitated to attempt the task, but as the days and weeks slipped by the desire to undertake it, grew more and more insistent, until the thought floated before me, like a beautiful vision that might in time become a dream fulfilled. I began as I cherished the hope of helping others, to read and reread the sweet story of old, until with the disciples I walked on holy ground.

Familiar as are the incidents of our Lord's ministry, part indeed of the warp and woof of memory, they have revealed Him to me with a vividness hitherto unfelt. To study this strangely beautiful, this unflawed life, has been to enter into a new abiding with the Master, to have a new sense of His personality as a force in the world.

In the compass of this little volume it has not been possible to introduce every event in

the story of Jesus, nor to repeat all His words. For these I would have my young friends go to the New Testament. My thought is that in this book they may find a companion to that, a book that may sometimes occupy them in the silent time as well as allure them at other times, and always be as a light flashed on the road that leads home. This book is purposely written with great simplicity so that mothers and children may read it together. Yet it is not limited to *little* children. Its message is to the older young people still in training for life and its activities.

Never was any life on earth so rich and full, as the life of our Master. Never was any one so busy and so beset and surrounded by those who sought help. Never was a life so constant in its outpouring of kindness as was that of Jesus, who went about doing good. Doing good in the superlative, and without stint, overflowing in blessings. Truly this was the Son of God.

As I have studied anew the amazing life of Jesus on earth, I have received impressions of its many-sidedness. He was gentle, submissive and meek. He was also valiant, commanding, and kingly. No manlier character than that of the Nazarene is found in all history, and none so compassionate to the weak, forgiving to the penitent.

As the little Son of Mary, as the Boy in the Temple, as the Guest at the Wedding Feast, as the Healer of the Sick, as the Friend of Lazarus and Martha and Mary, as the matchless Teacher, as the Lover of Little Children, as the Lamb that was Slain, as the Risen Redeemer, Jesus Christ appeals to every one. Most of all He appeals to the young, saying, "Come unto Me!" As of old He bade men "Follow Him" and they followed, so may the youth of this and other lands, hear His voice and forsake other leaders, and follow Him.

In this century as in each preceding century, the Man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, claims every heart and life.

May we each hear His call and obey. Still He is saying "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and still He is putting the emphasis of His approval, not on the proud and the lofty, but on the meek and the lowly, on those who keep the heart of the child to life's latest earthly day.

To the children at home, and in school, to the young people in the League and Endeavor circles, and to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, I commit this book, directing them to "That Sweet Story of Old."

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | The Star in the East | 13 |
| II. | The Song in the Air | 22 |
| III. | Of the Flight into Egypt | 31 |
| IV. | The Child and the Rabbis | 40 |
| V. | Two Young Men | 49 |
| VI. | The Temptation | 57 |
| VII. | Beside the Sea | 65 |
| VIII. | Jesus as a Wedding Guest | 72 |
| IX. | The Sermon on the Mount | 79 |
| X. | A Day in Jesus' Life | 88 |
| XI. | The Lad with the Loaves | 97 |
| XII. | The Raising of the Ruler's Daughter | 103 |
| XIII. | When Jesus Walked on the Sea | 109 |
| XIV. | Jesus and the Sabbath Day | 114 |
| XV. | Jesus Transfigured | 123 |
| XVI. | Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me | 133 |
| XVII. | Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By | 140 |
| XVIII. | By the Well of Samaria | 147 |
| XIX. | Jesus at the Feast | 153 |
| XX. | Jesus and Prayer | 161 |

XXI. Jesus and Pardon for Sin . . . 167
XXII. Lord, if Thou Hadst Been Here . 175
XXIII. The Sisters of Bethany . . . 182
XXIV. Hosanna to the Son of David . . 188
XXV. Some Parables of Jesus . . . 198
XXVI. The Last Supper . . . . 207
XXVII. Gethsemane . . . . . 216
XXVIII. In the House of the High Priest . 220
XXIX. Before Pilate's Judgment Seat . . 226
XXX. Jesus on the Cross . . . . 232
XXXI. The Lord is Risen . . . . 238
XXXII. A Wayside Walk . . . . 245
XXXIII. Lovest Thou Me? . . . . 252
XXXIV. Our Lord's Last Words . . . 258

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


FACING PAGE

Beholding the Star ..... Title
The Angel Said, "Fear Not." ..... 24
The Child in the Temple ..... 44
Behold the Lamb of God ..... 67
Jesus at Cana of Galilee ..... 73
He Touched Her Hand and the Fever Left Her. 93
Damsel, I Say unto Thee, Arise ..... 106
They Saw No Man, but Jesus Only ..... 130
Suffer the Little Ones ..... 133
By the Well of Samaria ..... 149
Him that Cometh unto Me I Will in No Wise Cast Out ..... 167
Jesus in the Home at Bethany ..... 182
Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem ..... 188
Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane ..... 217
Christ Before Pilate's Judgment Seat ..... 228
Jesus Saith unto Her, Mary ..... 243

# That Sweet Story of Old

## I

### THE STAR IN THE EAST

THREE kings, whom tradition has called Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, in the wonderful days of the long ago, set out on a weary journey to a distant land. There was a great deal of mystery about why they went, and how long they might stay, and when they might return. Friends and acquaintances thought it odd and foolish that people should leave homes where they were well off and comfortable, and set out on an expedition, nobody knew where, to encounter unknown dangers, very likely to be met by bands of robbers, or to fall sick and perish by the way. Gray-haired men shook their heads. No good could come, they said, of so strange and rash a quest. The old mothers, moving softly to and fro about the tents, in the shadow, shook their heads too, and the little children cried. All that the courtiers and the gray-beards, and the mothers, and the young wives, and the chil-

dren, and the villagers said, moved the three kings, who also were very wise men, with learning at their fingers' ends, not a single bit. They heard the babel of voices, they felt the tug of friendly hands, they saw the tears in loving eyes. But they went straight on, making ready to go, if need were, to the other side of the world. They could not stay.

They had seen, flaming bright and golden, in the evening sky a star with a glory like that of the sun. Where the star shone, the whole field of the sky was radiant. It was as if a sheaf of common stars had merged their beams and made one splendid orb, magnificent and sublime, a star that had lit its torch at the altar fires of heaven. These men had no books with printed pages like our own, but they knew how to read the leaves of God's great book of nature, and for them, plainly discerned there were signs in mist and rain, in dew and cloud, in moon, and sun, and stars. They even heard mystic voices speaking to them in the night season, and often, as they walked in the pasture lands and counted the flocks, or lingered in the hollows among the hills when the sun went down, they knew that the Maker of earth and heaven called them by name. So they could not stay.

They had seen the wonderful star! But not only this! As they gazed, each from his sepa-

rate place of watching, each had seen the star, like a pointing finger move in its course, and each had heard as plainly as if words had been spoken in their ears, the command of God, to follow the star.

All over the world, at the time this splendid star suddenly swept into view in the sky, there were those who expected some great thing to happen. Rome, from her seven hills, had made herself the world's haughty mistress. Her imperial eagles had been carried everywhere by her intrepid soldiers, and her arms had been universally victorious. The world was Rome's world, ruled by Roman soldiers and statesmen, and from princes to paupers, people of all lands and tongues, paid tribute to Rome.

Other great empires had held sway, and then lost their power. The kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia were now mere memories. Greece, that had been immensely strong, that under Alexander the Great, had ruled the nations, was still beautiful, and held a certain lustre of elegance and culture, had its schools and sages and students, but Greece was no longer dominant. The sceptre had passed away from Judah, as the prophets had foretold that it would, because the house of Israel and the house of Judah, had turned away from the God of their fathers. Corruption and idolatry

had stolen in where once had been pure worship and reverent obedience, and a Roman governor now ruled and lived in pomp and grandeur, where the Hebrew kings had once reigned on the throne of David.

Probably the stern rule of the Romans bore less heavily on the nomadic kings and chieftains of the Eastern lands, than on any other people then living. They had flocks and herds. They were not occupied with trade, nor were their sons anxious for a place in the fighting legions. They were thoughtful, simple, brooding men, far away from the rush and hurry of the great world.

News came to them seldom and slowly. The Romans were building broad roads, and spanning wide rivers with great bridges, but there were no roads over the desert, and the Roman posts brought no tidings to the black tents, where the sheik encamped with his family about him, living in the independence of the patriarchs, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job had done in an elder time.

Somehow, by what means we cannot tell, the thought had penetrated through the desert silence and remoteness that a mighty personage was about to be born. How much they knew of what Moses and Isaiah and Ezekiel and Malachi had prophesied, we cannot tell. But a Prince was coming!

They saw His Star in the East.

Great flocks were spread over great spaces. The three kings did not live next door to one another, nor meet at a crossroads post-office in the twilight, nor hold town meetings at intervals to talk things over. There were no towns then, nor town-meetings, no crowded streets in the wilderness. Yet they knew one another by name and sight, and were wont to salute with grave courtesy when they sometimes met.

Each, obedient to the promptings of the heavenly vision, made the leisurely haste of the desert to follow the star. Provisions were packed for a long journey. The camels were found and made ready. Retainers, servants, perhaps a son or two, joyfully prepared to set forth, when the master gave the word. And thus, starting from three separate points of the compass, the three caravans came together, and the three wise men following the star in the East, went onward to find the Prince of whose coming the star was a token. Many days they journeyed through the great barren deserts, resting sometimes in the noontide heat under the shadow of a friendly rock, or lingering now and then in an oasis of palms springing green beside a water-course. Often they broke camp in the early dawn, travelling in the cool of the day. The camels swung like

mighty ships, rocking from side to side, some sumptuously caparisoned for the comfort and state of their riders, and some laden with freight, food, rugs, the furniture of the tents, and still others bearing the rich gifts that were to be laid at the feet of the Prince when they should reach His palace gates.

After awhile, the three wise men, kings and chieftains, accustomed to exercising authority, rode often near together, the oldest in the van, the others following him, and often, when they ate or rested, they talked earnestly of the object of their journey. The Star, still serenely bright, and flaming like a golden torch, shed its kindly beams upon them. And they were content to fare onward, so long as they saw the Star.

Where would it lead them? They questioned reverently, these desert men, guileless as little children, in the completeness of their trust. Perhaps through crowds of alien peoples; perhaps through vast cities; perhaps into an enemy's country. No matter. They had no fear, they rode on, with high hearts, and faces looking straightforward; men with the courage of the lion, and the innocence of the dove. The Star was leading them. It would lead them to the palace of the Prince, to the place glorious with His presence.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem

of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem,

"Saying, where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him.

"When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

"And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

"And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

"And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

"Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

"And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also.

"When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

"And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

It was no palace in which the wise men found the One they sought, but a place so lowly that they might well have hesitated before they crossed its door-sill. They did not hesitate, for the star stood still at last, its heavenly radiance flooding the spot where the Child of Heaven lay in the arms of His mother.

They knelt and prostrated themselves to the earth in homage, and owned the little Babe as their sovereign. Never were kings more kingly than this royal three. And then, from their store of treasures, carried so far, guarded so carefully, they brought gold, to symbolize the offering of whatever toil can buy, and frankincense, to show the perfume of prayer and praise, and myrrh, the emblem of sorrow. Gold and frankincense and myrrh, all costly, all laid at the little feet that had not yet trodden one step of the earthly path.

So that the wicked Herod should not entrap them as he craftily designed, they returned to their own country another way. Not Star-led now, yet safe from harm, with God watching over and guiding them home.

"There came three kings, ere break of day,
All on Epiphanie;
Their gifts they bare both rich and rare,
All, all, Lord Christ for Thee:
Gold, frankincense, and myrrh are there,
Where is the King? O where? O where?
O where is the King? O where?

"The star shone brightly overhead,
The air was calm and still,
O'er Bethlehem fields its rays were shed,
The dew lay on the hill:
We see no throne, no palace fair,
Where is the King? O where? O where?
O where is the King? O where?

"An old man knelt at a manger low,
A Babe lay in the stall;
The starlight played on the Infant brow,
Deep silence lay o'er all;
A maiden bent o'er the Babe in prayer:—
There is the King? O there! O there!
O there is the King! O there!"

## II

### THE SONG IN THE AIR

"AND there were in that same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

"And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men."

Do you love a mountain-land, a land where when you waken in the morning the hills are violet and rose colour in the rising sun, where at evening they fall asleep before your eyes, all wrapped in crimson and gold? Well said the poet-king of old, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help."

Judea was a mountain land. Crags steep enough for the goats to climb, broad plateaus where the vines flourished, slopes covered with cedars, valleys, where the grass was like velvet, green pastures and still waters were in that lovely land to which our Saviour came, the little Child of Heaven.

One midnight when everybody was fast asleep except mothers awake because they had to watch by sick beds, and sentries pacing up and down before city walls, and shepherds, listening for the footfall of the prowling wolf, creeping, padding along that he might pounce upon a stray lamb of the flock, there was a sudden surprise in the hills where grazed and slept the Temple sheep. The finest flock in Palestine was the flock reserved for the use of the Temple, and the rough, shaggy looking shepherds who guarded it were the finest men of their class. Theirs was no easy life, out in all weather, daring all wind and storm, and ever on the alert against thief and wild beast.

Perhaps they were drowsy, perhaps one or another had told a story to beguile the tedium of the chill night. One may have been wondering about his little maid at home who had kissed him when he left for his long vigil, and would gleefully run to meet him when he came back. Fathers never forget

their little maids when they are away at work. Fathers' hearts are always true. Another shepherd may have been hoping that his big boy at home was looking out for his mother and the little ones when father was off on the hills.

These simple shepherd folk were very poor. Their homes had few comforts, and none of the luxuries that we commonly have in this day, but they had love just as we have, and they did their duty day by day as we ought to do. You may think how you would feel if some morning or night a great white angel, all blazing with light, should suddenly appear in your house, or stop you on the way to school, or walk beside you on the road. The shepherds were just as amazed as you would be, and I am sure they looked very much frightened and huddled close together just as their sheep did when some peril came near. But the angel's words were kind, and his countenance was friendly. "Fear not!" The gentle voice was sweet as the sound of softest music, the smile was as tender as a father's, and the shepherds forgot their terror.

"Fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

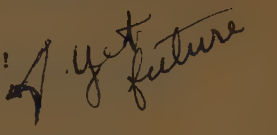
In an instant, the angel was not alone. Forth through a rift in the sky came a great host of bright beings, cherubim and seraphim,

THE ANGEL SAID, "FEAR NOT"

There is little in the Bible to
make people think angels had wi
the word Angel means - messenger, &
the angels or messengers were not al
supernatural beings.

angels in shining raiment, angels with golden harps, singing, in notes such as mortals had never heard:

"Glory to God in the Highest!
On earth peace,
Good will towards men!"



Fancy the thrilling sound of that melody. It seems strange that Jerusalem not far away, could sleep through that wonderful Hallelujah chorus, but it was not meant for the rich and proud and great: it was God's message to the poor and simple-hearted, through them, His message to the whole world.

Presently the music ceased. The angels melted away from sight, going back to heaven. Those shepherds would never be afraid to go there themselves, or afraid of death, after they had heard the angels sing, and seen the host of heavenly visitors, slip so quietly home to their own place, before their eyes. And if ever after that, they said a last good-bye to a little child, or a friend, they could say it with a smile, for they knew, that a little way off, only a bit beyond their sight, the dear one was with the angels.

Day was breaking, and they girded up their loins, and took their shepherd's staves in their hands, and, as the sun rose high over the hills, they made haste to reach Bethlehem, and find

the child, of whose birth they had heard the angels sing.

They too, with the wise men, earth's greatest and earth's lowliest children, met around the feet of the Infant Jesus.

The hill roads were crowded that day, and when they reached Bethlehem, the shepherds may have been puzzled to know just where to go, and how to reach the One they sought. Their coming was not noticed by Herod. They had no retinue, nor cavalcade, they brought no costly gifts. The whole country was filled at the time with a moving populace, for a decree had gone forth from the Emperor Augustus at Rome, that all the world should be taxed, and scattered families returned to their native towns and hamlets, that their genealogy might be traced, an accurate account of the royal revenues made, and an accurate list made by the census takers, of all who must pay tribute.

Among the thousands who in obedience to the Emperor's edict had repaired to their native town, how were the shepherds to discover the parents of the Child they were seeking? How know this Child from any other new-born babe? I have only one explanation. As the wise men were led by the Star, I think the shepherds were guided by an angel. They may have seen the Star, but they would

not notice it, as they might had they not had that glimpse of an opened heaven.

I can imagine the shepherds going home, after that visit to the stable, where the world's Redeemer was born, and being very silent and thoughtful.

"What have you seen, father, that you keep gazing up at the blue sky?" the little daughter might ask. "Where have you lingered, that you come home so late?" the wife would say. But the man could not yet talk about the strange music, and the kneeling in the early dawn to look into the face of an hour old babe.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a young girl, of the house and lineage of David. Centuries before the Lord came hither, it was predicted that He should be born of a virgin, and that Bethlehem would be the place of His birth.

When Mary, spent and weary with her long, long journey from Nazareth, reached Bethlehem, the night was falling fast, and her husband, Joseph, tried hard to find a safe shelter for her where she might rest. In vain he tried. There was no room in the inn. But there was a stable, clean and sweet with the breath of kine, and the fragrance of hay, and here the tired traveller made her bed. Here, in the dim stable, lighted by a rude and flar-

ing lamp, she first saw the sweet face of her first-born Son.

Before our Lord was born, an angel had come to His mother and had announced to her what sort of Child she should bear, and had then said, "His name shall be called Jesus." Jesus means Saviour. So, you see, every step in Christ's progress was marked for Him in heaven, even His very name sent down before Him from the skies.

It might have been expected that when God sent His only Son here to save sinners and bless the world, He would have had Him come into a splendid house, with the state and magnificence that belong to royal homes. A queen one would think, might have cradled Him in her arms, while long trains of humble servants waited to care for Him, and do His mother's bidding.

Not so, do we read the sweet story of old. The little King, Immanuel God with us, was the child of poverty. No palace for Jesus, only a stable. His mother was not a queen, only a little maiden from an obscure country home. No trains of servants stood mute and anxious, that they might wait on her in her hour of need. Even the inn could not give her a bed. She and her Child were in the stable, and the Babe slept in the manger, when the Star, its mission accomplished, faded

into the sunlight and was seen no more, and the angels finished their song, in worlds beyond our own.

So, dear reader, wherever you are, you are Christ's child. He is your Brother. No one so poor as He. No one so lowly-born. You need not ever be afraid to go to Jesus, the little Son of Mary, who was born in a stable and laid in a manger.

The Christ-child unto the stable came
'Twixt the midnight and the morn,
His mother laid Him softly down
By the beasts of hoof and horn.
The friendly kine a-near Him stood
In the frost of the early day,
And, little brother of all the poor,
He slept in the fragrant hay.

The Christ-child slept in the stable dim,
And over Him flamed the star
That was golden bright with the light of heaven
Where God and the angels are.
Then, journeying far, came king and priest,
With a wealth of spices sweet,
And, little brother of all the rich,
They knelt to kiss His feet.

In a mother's arms, the Christ-child lay,
When the winter storm was wild,
And into her happy brooding face
Her baby looked and smiled.
Of David's line, yet peasant born,
And Son of God most high;
The seraphs sang His glorias
And the star lit up the sky.

A gift of gifts that tender Child
  Brought hither for you and me;
From the leaven of greed, the clutch of hate,
  By love to be ransomed free.
And once a year, in the long, long year,
  For a whole and happy day,
To share again the heart of the Child
  Wherever the children play.

O little brother of every man!
  Obscure, or high, or great,
Thine is the alchemy of heaven
  Wrought on our low estate.
We find Thee still in the stable dim,
  But, for Thy cradle bed,
Oh, rest not now in the manger stall,
  Take Thou our hearts instead.

## III

### OF THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

WHILE the mother and her little Son were safely hidden by their very poverty, since nobody thought of looking for the Child of promise in the stable where the cattle of the inn were sheltered, a very sad thing took place. Herod, the King of the Jews, was one of the most wicked tyrants who ever lived. He belonged to a wicked family. Few families have ever had so black a page in history as the page of the Herodian dynasty.

They stopped at nothing, the people of the Herod name; they carried out their bad designs at any cost. Such people never have an easy mind. They are always afraid that something is going to happen to them, that some bolt of vengeance is about to fall on their heads. Herod had heard vague rumours that about this time, the world's great deliverer would be born. This might mean to him that his throne should be taken away, and punishment be visited on him for all his sins. He must search for this heir of the ages, and strike a quick and effective blow. So reasoned Herod.

"Where are those philosophers who came from the East a few days ago, seeking in my dominions for the Child who was born to be King of the Jews?"

I can hear Herod asking this question of his spies, and of his body-guard, men who cringed at his frown, and were swift to obey his commands.

"They were to return and conduct me to the place when they had found their ~~divinity~~. I told them that I wanted to worship Him too. Who has seen them? By what road have they travelled, that they did not come hither to take leave of me?"

The monarch was very angry. His countenance grew purple with rage. He clenched his fists, and his voice was like the furious growl of a maddened tiger. There was tiger blood in the veins of this infamous wretch, on whose shoulders was the crimson robe of a royal house.

In vain he tried to find out the abiding-place of the wise men from the East. Their wisdom had led them away from his palace, and they were already many leagues distant, their camels with mighty strides, hasting homeward over desert and plain.

"Well," said Herod, at last, "the little Prince, if prince He be shall not escape me. I will kill all the children from two years old

and under, in all the coasts and regions round about, and among them surely there will be slain the one these Eastern dreamers came to worship."

When one thinks of it even now, one's heart aches to imagine the bitter sorrow that fell on Bethlehem in that terrible day. Was there a babe in any home, dimpled, sweet, rosy, a babe toddling about on its little feet, or cradled in its mother's arms, it was doomed. A soldier with a sharp sword would stalk over the threshold, and before the mother could snatch her darling up, or as it lay in her lap, with one thrust of the blade, the babe was murdered. Most cruel and abhorred of all men, was that vile Herod of Judea who made war on infancy that he might slay the Christ.

His schemes were defeated for though there was lamentation and weeping, a wail piercing to heaven from all that land, Mary and her little Son were not there. Warned by an angel, they had gone down into Egypt, there to stay until this storm should blow over.

Joseph, Mary, and the Babe, found refuge in the land, where many centuries before, the Israelites had been kept in harsh bondage. Egypt was the land where Joseph had been held a slave, after his sale to Midianitish traders by his perfidious brothers. There he had become the prime minister of Pharaoh, and

the greatest and most honoured citizen in the country. In a time of famine his brothers had sought food for their families from Egypt, not knowing that the ruler of the land was the one they had sold away into slavery. He was able to save them and their households, and to bring his old father, Jacob, and his little brother, Benjamin, into Egypt where they lived in peace and plenty for many years. As time passed the Egyptians were not kind to the Hebrews, but oppressed them in a cruel and rigorous servitude after strange kings "who knew not Joseph," had come into power. And then, by a series of extraordinary deeds, Moses set the people free, and led them over the Red Sea which opened before them, so that the green waves piling high on either hand like emerald walls, they passed through the flood on foot, as over a beaten floor. On through the wilderness then, to Canaan.

Now, hundreds of years have gone, and the wilderness track is taken once more, by a little party of quiet travellers, as the Child of Mary is borne down into Egypt.

A prophet of the olden days had said, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," and every word of prophecy, in the story of Jesus our Saviour, was literally fulfilled.

As Jewish artisans often sojourned in Egypt, practicing their trades, or Jewish merchants

went there to sell their wares, it was not an uncommon thing for strangers such as these to stay awhile in Egypt. The young mother felt safe there, watching over her lovely Child, and Joseph, her grave and gentle-mannered husband, tenderly cared for them both, till word came that Herod was dead. With joy and gladness the little home was then given up, the home in the land of the stranger, and, breaking camp, the three returned to Judea.

Before the flight into Egypt, there had been a very beautiful scene in the Temple at Jerusalem. When Jesus was eight days old, He was circumcised, as the Jewish custom required. A little later His parents carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord before the altar of sacrifice. Rich people brought a lamb without blemish as their offering, but the poor brought only a pair of turtle-doves, and these were the offering of Mary.

As she stood there, a peasant-woman, in the dress and veil that Syrian women wore, something unusual happened. Shall we read about it in the words of St. Luke?

"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

"And it was revealed to him by the Holy

Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

"And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law,

"Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word:

"For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

"And Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him.

"And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

"(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own heart also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

"And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the

temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Jesus was born into the world a little Hebrew Child, and as a Hebrew Child He was very strictly brought up and taught the law of God. The children of Israel were early taught the observances of their faith, were trained regularly to attend the synagogue, and to commit to their memories such parts of the Scripture as they then had. This was the sort of training our dear Lord had, and as a result, we are told, that "the Child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him."

The years went on, and Jesus was the delight of His mother's soul. Think of it, He was a sinless Child. The dearest and best children we have ever seen, are sometimes willful and perverse, fly into a rage, or shed tears from angry temper. Which of us does not remember with shame times when we were unkind or cowardly or perhaps deceitful, or vain, when we thought too highly of ourselves and looked down on some one else? Which of us has not been lazy and inclined to shirk a task, or disobedient and in heart a rebel

against father, mother or teacher? Alas, the garment of our soul has many a spot and stain. We compare it with the whiteness of our Saviour's robes, and our garment looks dark, more like wind-blown and dust-dimmed snow, than like snow new fallen from the skies. But it was not so with Jesus. He was the sinless Child, pure in heart, pure in speech, and pure in deed. No other child ever lived through childhood's years, without once committing a single sin.

The old painters who loved to depict the Virgin and her Child, found a favourite subject in the Temple scene where the aged Simeon and the aged Anna were moved to so much ecstasy at the sight of this little One. Infants were daily presented to Jehovah in the Temple. There must have been something in the face of Jesus, far sweeter, far purer, than any look in any other childish face.

I sometimes ask myself,

> "Do I love the Lord or no,
> Am I His or am I not?"

And then, I try to think of Him, as He lay in Mary's arms, the Holy Child, the Child of Bethlehem. I am sure I would never have turned away from the loveliness and majesty of the sinless Child. And then, with the children I like to repeat,

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild
Look upon a little child,
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

"Fain I would to Thee be brought;—
Gracious God, forbid it not,
In the kingdom of Thy grace
Grant a little child a place."

Jesus never sinned once although
he lived in our Adamic sinful
nature. He conquered all the sin
impulses which we so often give way
to.

## IV

### THE CHILD AND THE RABBIS

You know, do you not, that the passover, the greatest feast of the Jews, was kept in memory of the time when they escaped from Egypt and the bondage in which they were held by Pharaoh. After Pharaoh had again and again hardened his heart and refused to let the Israelites leave his house of bondage, God, who had visited the Egyptians with successive dreadful plagues, sent a destroying angel who entered every door in Egypt. In a single night, this angel of death, swept across the doomed land, and from the halls of the king, to the hovel of the meanest churl, he snatched away the first-born child. In every home, a child lay in the sleep that knows no waking. But the Lord had directed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb to Him, and to touch their door-posts with the blood of the slain lamb, and the angel entered no home, where the sacred sign of the blood was seen on the door. Darkness and death and despair in the homes of the Egyptians. Life and light and hope like a kindling glow, in the homes of the Hebrews. The latter were dressed as

for a journey; and on their tables was a simple meal; the flesh of the lamb, and unleavened bread, the bread that can be baked in haste, and as they ate, they listened for the command to go with their young and their old, their flocks and their herds, their wives and their little ones, out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.

By God's command in all their later history the Jews kept the Feast of the Passover. Once a year with simple rites, each household eating the feast by itself, the great event of the national deliverance was commemorated.

Read the seventy-eighth psalm, which begins, "Give ear, O my people to my law, incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, showing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done." This psalm and the group of psalms nearest it, are lofty hymns of praise to Jehovah, who had brought the nation out of its troubles and set it in a large place. You could not spend Sunday afternoons better than in marking passages in the psalms, and in the portions of the Old Testament which tell how God redeemed His people

with a mighty hand. In the book of Acts of the Apostles you will find Stephen, in his defense before the High Priest and the Sanhedrim, wonderfully narrating this same grand story.

It was the Jewish custom, once every year, to keep the great Passover Feast at Jerusalem. In a period when books as we have them were unknown, and parchment rolls carefully written out by scribes and priests were costly and rare, never owned by individuals, but only by cities and communities, guarded under lock and key, and read to the congregation at stated intervals, the national history was handed down by word of mouth from father to son. Pilgrimages across country to the great Temple at Jerusalem, undertaken by tribes and clans, at considerable effort, expense and inconvenience, helped to fix the patriotic thought and crystallize it into something that could never wear out.

When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and for the first time, took Him with them. At twelve or thirteen, a Jewish boy was supposed to begin sharing the religious duties of manhood. He had been taught everything that Joseph knew of the law and the prophets, and Mary may have sometimes told Him that more was expected of Him than of other chil-

dren, that He was, in a sense, different from theirs, His Father's Son. Whether or not this was so, the boy went eagerly up to the great passover, His heart filled with gladness, His face radiant. In the company of His kindred, He may not always have kept closely at His mother's side. Cousins, nephews and near relations were often spoken of as brothers and sisters in those days.

When the passover was finished, and the company were slowly faring home again, Jesus was missed by Joseph and Mary.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

"And when they found Him not, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou

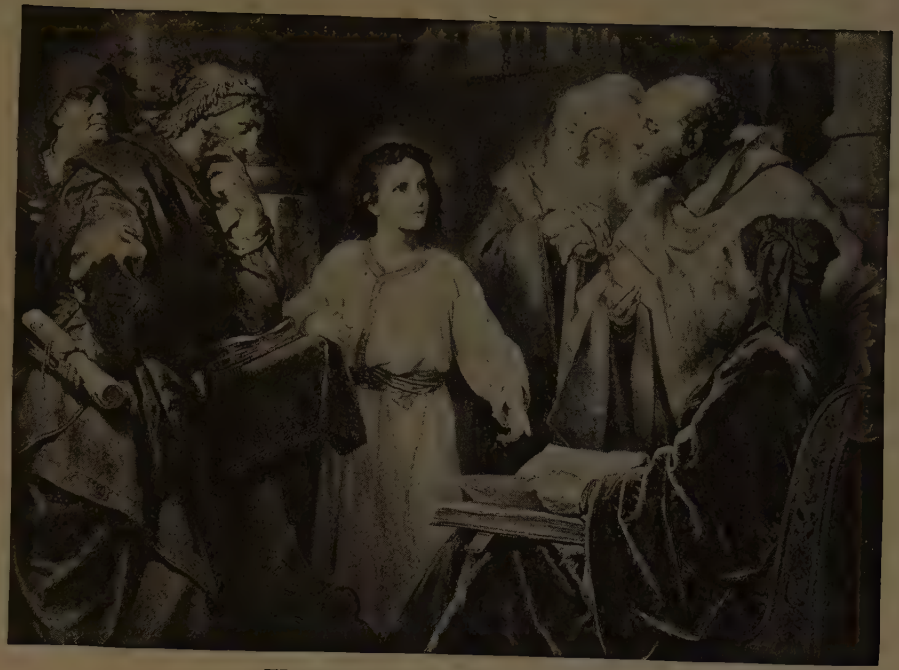
thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.

"And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the sayings which He spake unto them.

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

When one is intensely interested in any pursuit, time flies by like a dream. Jesus, forgotten or overlooked by His elders, had drifted past the crowd, into some room of the Temple, where the learned doctors, men of grave and reverend aspect, were discussing matters of weighty importance. Fancy a child of twelve, standing on the edge of a group of ministers who to-day might be talking about the wonderful deeds and words of God. Holman Hunt's picture shows us a circle of seven venerable men, their keen dark eyes fastened on a slender lad standing in their midst, "both hearing them and asking them questions." Children sometimes ask questions that are hard to answer. I think Jesus wanted to learn all He could about what the passover meant, why it was kept, what these old men knew of the nation's history. His whole being was awake.



THE CHILD IN THE TEMPLE

I believe this picture is a copy of Hoffmans picture (He was a famous artist)

I have never seen a picture of Chr which made him look like a Jew. which he was. Seldom a Jew beli in Christ — so all or most all the pictures of him are made by Gentiles + the Gentiles do not like the Jews so they do not picture him as a Jew.

Out of the hush of His country home at Nazareth, He had stepped into the throbbing life of a town at flood-tide. He had seen the knife of the priest smiting the lamb on the altar. He had recited the responses in the great assembly. He had lifted His voice in the grand Hallelujah chorus. His mother would not be at His side, for she would be with the women who worshipped apart, but He would, with other lads, stand among the men, and for the first time, He felt, though He did not understand it, that He would soon be a man.

When Mary, flushed and reproachful, reclaimed her lost child in the temple, He could not at once come back to earthly things. He had not noticed the lapse of time; perhaps He had not broken bread since His mother had left Him. To her natural inquiry why He had given His parents this anxiety, He made a reply, already quoted, perplexing enough and strange when coming from childish lips.

"Wist ye not that I *must* be about My Father's business?"

It was for them the parting of the ways. Their child had heard the first boom of the waves that were to bear Him far, far out of their sight. He spoke without a thought of disrespect, as one who announced a fact. They knew that a claim higher than theirs had been laid upon the child.

Silently they turned away, and meekly He accompanied them to the home in Nazareth. The Rabbis looked at one another, strange thoughts in their hearts. No doubt some of them wondered what God meant to do through this amazing Boy, so unlike other boys, so full already of heavenly insight and wisdom.

Here drops the curtain for many years. All that we are told is "that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

Jesus went to Nazareth with His parents and was subject to them, that is, He obeyed them in everything, and was a dutiful and loving son in the home. Joseph was a carpenter, and in the shop where he worked with plane and saw, I am sure that he had the help and companionship of the Youth, who was not yet ready to go out into the world, and work among men. I can imagine Him, with His sweet serious face, and His steady deft hand, managing tools as dexterously as later He managed men. The shavings fell on the floor, yellow and fragrant; there were people then who had in their houses, chairs, boxes and tables, and the Tokes for their cattle, and made by Him, who had left heaven to tarry among working people here below. Surely every working man should love Jesus Christ, who, in the quiet years in Nazareth, did many a full

day's work in the shop, and at night slept as working men do, the deep sleep of the weary.

If in the time to come, you are ever tempted by pride, to look down on those whose hands are hardened with toil, say to yourself, "The Lord of Glory did not think it beneath His dignity to do day's labour in the shop of a carpenter. He exemplified in His own life the truth of the proverb "before honour is humility."

To Bethlehem a Child there came,
Oh, ages long ago,
The angels brought from heaven His name
That fully we might know
The errand of the Christ-Child here,
To bring us joy and mirth,
To bless with peace, or far or near,
The warring, weary earth.

The angels sang for very bliss
Across the silent skies;
Was ever message glad as this
Here sent from Paradise?
At rapture of that kindling word,
The morning stars again,
As erst, to melody were stirred,
And tuned their sweet refrain.

Adown the dewy mountain slope
The simple shepherds fared,
Their hearts were full of wistful hope;
That hope the world hath shared.
With staff and crook and girded limb,
They left the flock and fold,
And found their eager way to Him
By ancient seers foretold.

They found Him where the lowing kine
  Stood in the stable dim ;
A mother, sweet as yours or mine,
  In soft arms cradled Him.
Wise men by trackless deserts led,
  Star-guided found Him too,
And lowly bowed each kingly head ;
  The King of kings they knew.

So came the Child to Bethlehem !
  So comes He still to men.
And we may bring Him gold and gain,
  And worship Him as then
They did, whose gifts were spice and myrrh ;
  Ours be the service meet
For every humble worshipper
  To kneel and kiss His feet.

## V

### TWO YOUNG MEN

FORTH from the desert, from its silence and its vastness, came John the Baptist. Did you ever see a meteor flash across the sky at night? John the Baptist was like that, a sudden great light breaking on the darkness. The times were full of evil. Men had forgotten God. Vices from idolatrous nations had crept in among the chosen people. The heathen had profaned the very borders of the temple. In greed to make money, people were willing to be hypocrites and cheats. It was an hour when Satan reigned, and Jehovah was insulted.

Once before in the history of the Hebrews, a man had come forth from the desert, with words of warning and rebuke. The Jews revered the memory of Elijah the Tishbite, a prophet who wore rough clothing, and feared no man, not even the King. John the Baptist was very much like Elijah. He appeared suddenly. He was dressed in camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins. He was satisfied with the desert's simple fare, for his meat was "locusts and wild honey."

He described himself as "the voice of one

crying in the wilderness," his message being, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." John was the kinsman of Jesus, his mother Elizabeth being Mary's cousin. His father and mother had waited long in childlessness and were old, when this son was given them. Like Isaac, who was born when his parents were old, and like Samuel who came in answer to prayer, John was from birth specially endowed with gifts and graces. He was a child of the covenant, and among the great men of the world, few may take a higher place than John the Baptist. As you read history you will find that he belongs on the roll of fame, with the great prophets and reformers, with Elijah, Isaiah, and Malachi, with ~~Savonarola~~ and ~~Martin Luther and John Huss,~~ and ~~Oliver Cromwell and John Knox.~~ X A few years after his first magnificent stride on the stage, and his first splendid success, he died in prison, by the sword of Herod's executioner, a martyr to the truth he had preached. And then, Jesus Himself said of him, "Among men born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

In ancient times, when a king was about to visit any part of his realm, it was customary to send a herald before him, that proper preparation to receive the royal guest might be made. John came to be the herald or forerunner of

X These men not in the same class with Elijah Isaiah & Malachi

Jesus. During the quiet years at Nazareth, Jesus had toiled in the carpenter's shop, and no doubt had spent many an hour at evening in the fields communing with His Father in heaven. The years thus passed by Jesus, had, by John the Baptist, been spent in contemplation. As a child, in the house of a priest, he had been made familiar with the hallowed rites of the temple, and had grown up in an atmosphere of prayer and piety. Life to him had been a serious thing, and he had never longed for ease, or been moved by worldly ambition. When the right moment came, he stepped out of obscurity, a commanding and conspicuous figure, with a gift of oratory, a scorn and contempt of sin, and a voice like a trumpet. He stood by the bank of the Jordan and cried to the crowds who trooped to hear him, "Repent ye. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

The world always pauses in its mad career to listen to the man with convictions. Not John's rough dress, nor his leonine face and wild hair, nor yet the compelling music of his voice, drew to him the hearts of men, and made them like wax in his hands. His personality was tremendous because he was tremendously in earnest. If you want to move people you must mean what you say. He meant what he said, believed it through and through. When he talked to the Pharisees

who were rather given to self-conceit, though good people on the whole, and to the Sadducees who were skeptical and refused to believe God's word, to the Roman soldiers who mingled freely in the throngs about him, and to the publicans, whom everybody distrusted, he hit in every case, straight from the shoulder. He was like the surgeon who is not contented to graze the edge of a wound, but cuts to the core, and extracts the evil at its root.

The publicans, as a class, were shameless robbers. They ground the poor to earth and pillaged the rich, and in consequence they were hated by both rich and poor. Nobody thought a publican could possibly have any good in him. John found a way to reach these men, and told them that repentance for them must mean being just and honourable, and exacting no more than the law allowed. The soldiers were often dreaded in the community, for they were apt to brawl and bluster, and were given to trampling on the rights of others. "Do violence to no man," said the bold reformer whom the Roman uniform did not daunt.

Good preaching was this of the young man from the desert. Those who heard it were quick to respond. They confessed their sins, and asked to be baptized. A motley crowd was that about the Jordan river, flowing be-

tween its steep banks and rippling in the breeze, little ships with white sails floating in the distance, and on the water's edge, the rough prophet with the inspired face, baptizing Jew and Roman, and all who truly repented.

One day as John was baptizing, down to the water's edge, came a man young like himself. There was nothing eccentric in His dress or exclusive in His bearing. He wore the ordinary garb of the Jew, and was accompanied by no one. Yet the crowd parted before Him, they knew not why, and He presently stood at the preacher's side, they two alone, the others at a little distance, as if they were spectators, near enough to hear remarkable words, yet themselves making no comment.

Those nearest thought they saw tears in the eyes of John, and for a moment wondered if he were going to kneel. But he remained standing.

"I have need," he said, "to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

"Suffer it to be so now," said the man, who bowed His head to the baptism of the cool Jordan waves. "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," John had cried in tones that rang across the distance and were heard on the

farthest verge of the throng, "but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I am not able to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

After the baptism of Jesus, "He came up out of the water, and lo! a voice from heaven was heard saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

What wonder that when Jesus preached, and all men flocked to hear His words, He preached a higher message than that of John. "Repent ye," said Jesus, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

~~We are nearer heaven than we dream~~. We do not know it, but the land unseen is very close to ours, and there are those in heaven who watch what is going on here, with eyes of the tenderest love. To you and me God may speak, as He did, to Jesus through the opened sky, saying that He is well pleased. Sometimes He comes so near that we do indeed know His presence and hear His voice. But we cannot expect this gladness, unless, as Jesus did, we live, wholly given up in every thought and pulse of being, to do the Father's will.

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

"And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

"Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

"And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

"John answered them saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the

Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

Behold the Lamb of God! None who heard that phrase misunderstood its meaning. The smoke of the sacrifice never ceased on the temple-altars, and forever were lambs without blemish brought to be offered. Behold the Lamb of God. So let us behold this Lamb, slain for us, and say,

There must be a change of mind & actions when one comes to baptism

"Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come!

"Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God, I come."

## VI

### THE TEMPTATION

In my girlhood there were few books written for the young, and so, as a reading child, I read grown up people's books. A child who loves to read will find great pleasure in books, although they may be a little beyond her comprehension. Among the books I devoured and read over and over until I knew it almost by heart was Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

One of my favourite chapters described a terrible fight that Christian had with a foul fiend named Apollyon. This monster was hideous to behold with scales like a fish, wings like a dragon, and feet like a bear. In our copy of the book there was a print showing him in all his panoply of frightful ugliness, fire and smoke issuing from his body, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. This creature, the great adversary of mankind in person, came roaring out on the pilgrim who stood his ground defiantly. He could not run away, for he had no armour for his back. The Wicked One approached with anger and disdain, and

the conflict was long and awful, poor Christian being grievously wounded before it was ended, and once being thrown quite to the ground. Nimbly springing up, he called out, "Rejoice not over me, mine enemy, though I fall, I shall rise again." Soon after this Apollyon spread his black dragon wings and flew away, and Christian went on his journey victorious.

We cannot understand it, but the ~~devil,~~ strange as it seems, dared to confront the Lord of Christians. Christ was to undergo every trial that could ever befall His followers. But He was not to be wounded or thrown down.

"Christ leads us through no darker room
Than He went through before."

Returning from Jordan full of the Holy ~~Ghost~~, the voice from heaven still sounding in His ears, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He must be alone for awhile before He could be ready to meet great multitudes and perform great works.

He was there in the wilderness forty days, during which time He tasted no food. Afterwards He hungered. Into the wilderness fastness, ventured ~~a black-winged angel~~, bold and daring, whose errand was to tempt Jesus and try if possible to sully His purity and lead

Him into sin. The devil was skillful in black arts, smooth-tongued and polite, and very persevering. He returned again and again to the combat though always foiled. Not till he had ended all the temptation did he depart from Jesus for a time.

Why was the Sinless One, at the very outset of His ministry, confronted by the Prince of the powers of evil? Apollyon probably came in shining armour, dark, yet impressive, not as the foul fiend darting at poor tired Christian. He would not bring his dragon wings or his scaly coat of mail to the desert place where he subtly tried to tempt the Son of God. Yet, he was the same old devil who first assailed Eve in Eden, and whom, if *you* have read the "Pilgrim's Progress" you remember as attacking Christian and hotly disputing his way, trying to put an end to him. At the time of our dear Lord's coming, the devil and his angels were very active in the world and very busy indeed in Palestine. Jesus was to vanquish demons and send them out of the poor people they were destroying. First, He must Himself have a hand-to-hand conflict with the Arch-deceiver and most deadly adversary, and come off from the strife, a conqueror.

You must notice, that Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, was led by the Spirit to go apart from the multitude and have a period of se-

clusion and quiet, before beginning His public work.

When we are most exalted, we, who are sinful and erring human beings, when we are most uplifted to a high and lofty plane, are in most danger of reaction. The pendulum swings from great joy to deep melancholy. The one who was on the crest of the wave yesterday may be in the trough of the sea tomorrow.

Jesus was not as we are, erring and imperfect, but He was a man, "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." He came to be our Saviour, so He had to know our dangers and our temptations too. The devil is always coming after us, and trying to undermine us by his snares, but there is no need that he should overcome us. Resist the ~~devil~~ and he will flee from you. Make a brave stand up fight against the devil, and he will leave you and seek for easier prey. ~~The devil is a coward.~~

The devil takes a mean advantage of people when they are tired and hungry. Jesus had been fasting for days. In His mood of spiritual elevation He had no desire for food and drink, but as that passed, He became spent and famished.

This was the Wicked One's opportunity. "If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

Resist the Devil — or evil influences within us.

Men are devils when they do or suggest evil things

Jesus answered him saying, that "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

You see, what a good thing it is to know one's Bible. Jesus knew His Bible. If you know what God has said, you always have a weapon. The Bible is a sword that is mighty in battle.

Observe that the devil tried to persuade Jesus to use miraculous power for a doubly selfish end. To prove to *him* that He was the Son of God, and to relieve His own urgent want. Christ never once wrought a miracle for His individual need or comfort, or for anything connected with self. Notice this too, that Jesus never wrought a miracle in direct opposition to the laws of nature. Dead stones cannot be made into living bread. Jesus sometimes hastened law, but He never violated it.

The wily Wicked One, now tried another tack. He took Jesus up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and said, "You shall have all this, all of it, the power and the glory, it is within my power to promise it. Fall down and worship *me*, and not a prince or a king but shall fall down and worship you. Think of it! Such an easy condition! Such a dazzling reward!"

But, though in this strange world of ours,

men have sold their souls to the devil, and enjoyed a brief season of power, wealth and glory, only to go to unquenchable fire hereafter, Jesus was not a man to be thus tempted. His purity was unsullied by such a wish as this which the devil tried to lure Him with. He was a young man of Galilee, unknown, poor, and the lure held out to Him was that He should deliver His people from the yoke of the Roman, restore their ancient glory, and Himself sit on the throne of the Imperial Cæsars.

Not for one second did this temptation attract Jesus. He said in cold clear accents, that might well have warned His adversary, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve. Get thee behind Me, Satan."

One would suppose that this defiance might have sent the devil flying away in dismay, but no, he tried again. He next tried to make Jesus cast Himself down, through sheer abysses of space, from a pinnacle of the temple, expecting that God would deliver Him. Note that Jesus never puts a premium on mere fool-hardiness. Calmly He answered, It is said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And now the devil took his leave. From that time, he interfered directly no more with Jesus of Nazareth.

Though the great Wicked One did not at-

tempt any more duels, so to speak, with the Son of God, he was His implacable foe so long as Jesus lived on the earth. His wiles were the inspiration of bad men, he was at every point prompting the envy and malice and hatred of those who did not love the meek and lowly Nazarene. Again and again did Jesus put the devil to flight when the people whom Jesus cared for were assaulted by him. The demons cried, "I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God," and they could not stand before the word of command that Jesus spoke.

From His triumphant strife with Satan, Jesus came again into the world of men, and soon He began to gather followers around Him. From this time He lived where everybody could see and hear Him, a life in the public eye, such as few men have ever lived.

Jesus was thirty years old, when His work among men began. It was to continue three years. The first step in the drama was taken. He went to His old home, but not to work any more at Joseph's bench, for He must be about His Heavenly Father's business. So He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, opened the Book, and began to read, His first teaching being among His kindred and neighbours, among the children who had grown up with Him, and the old folk

who remembered Him as a Child. He was to preach all over Galilee, through its hills and vales, and beside the sea. "Repent ye," was His message, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

There is no such person as a supernatural Devil.

## VII

### BESIDE THE SEA

"MASTER, where dwellest Thou?"

The question fell wistfully from the lips of a young man, who had been one of John's disciples. Disciple means scholar. To have sat at the feet of John the Baptist and learned of him, was to be ready to advance to a higher grade. John's disciple might easily become Christ's follower.

"Come and see," said Jesus. So this man and another accepted the invitation. They came and saw where He dwelt, and that night they abode with Him. It was about the tenth hour, four o'clock in the afternoon.

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

"And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

"And the day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.

"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

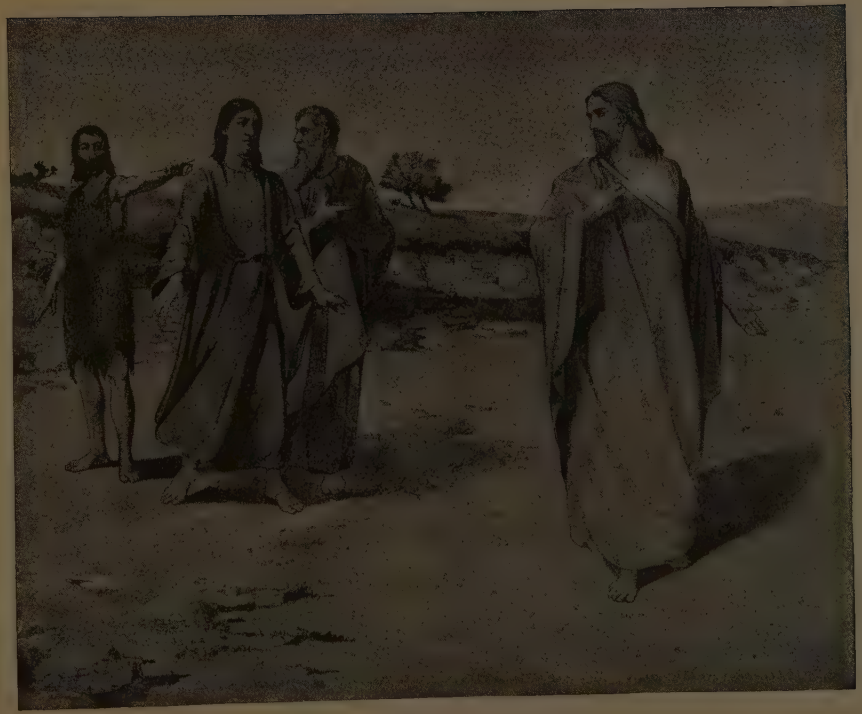
"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!

"Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

"Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

"And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."



BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

In another place we are told how Peter and James and John, fishermen of Galilee, left their nets at the Saviour's call. "Follow Me!" He said, and they heard and obeyed.

They did not cease to be fishermen. Often after they became the servants and friends of Christ, they went out on the lake in their little boats and toiled till they had a catch that they might bring to land. There are beautiful pictures of the Master and the fisherfolk all through the gospels. But their chief business was not fishing, nor earning money, nor doing anything whatever, except serving the Master. That came first from the day they heard Him speak. Jesus called Andrew, Peter, John, James, Nathanael Matthew, Zaccheus each by name, and thenceforward they were not their own, but His. He calls you and me by our names as He called them. Are we ready to be His disciples?

As soon in that day, as any one knew the beautiful secret of Jesus' love, he went and told somebody else. It was the sort of thing that was too good to keep. Jesus, so loving, so winning, so wonderful, asked a man to be His friend. The man did not hesitate a minute. He left all, and followed Jesus, and he begged his brothers, and cousins, and acquaintances to come too.

There are other instances in history of this

singular influence exercised by a winning personality. When the great Napoleon came back from his exile at Elba, he stepped on the soil of France almost alone, but the news of his return soon spread like wild-fire; his old soldiers rallied about him, and in a day or two he was again the leader of an army. Courage and daring and magnetism have ever won the hearts of men. But Jesus had no story behind Him, no record to waken enthusiasm. He was absolutely new, and so to speak, appeared out of space, as had His own Star in the East. He walked along the beach, and the fishermen mending their nets, or coming in to shore, their boats laden with shining spoil, or perhaps returning empty-handed and sorrowful, felt the magic of His gaze. He glanced at them and their hearts leaped up to answer His look. Long after these days, there was a young man who hated Jesus, and tried with all his might to hurt His cause, and kill His disciples. The young man was hurrying on the highroad with a troop of people, bent on the massacre of those who served the Christ. Suddenly, at midday there shone a light from heaven, and out of that light, straight into the young man's eyes, looked the eyes of Jesus. One blinding, blazing moment, they looked, those reproachful, compassionate, masterful eyes. "Lord what wilt Thou have me to

do?" instantly cried the vanquished foe, from that hour a loyal friend, a friend and servant of the Lord to the last breath of life.

As Jesus looked at men and spoke to them, they did not resist His call or deny His claim.

"Follow Me," He said to the fishermen, "and I will make you fishers of men." That meant that they should have higher work, worthier work, work farther reaching.

The characters of these men who became the first known among the followers of Jesus, were different. Peter was a lovable man, warm-hearted, zealous and impulsive. He was married, and in his home his wife's mother, honoured and cherished as the mother-in-law has always been in the East, lay sick of a fever at the very time Christ summoned Peter to other service than fishing. The Master entered the home, stood by the couch, laid a cool hand on the hot brow, spoke a gentle word and lo! the fever left the sufferer. She was all at once well, and rose and ministered to the household. No wonder that they brought other sick people to Jesus, begging Him to heal them.

John and James were brothers, sons of Zebedee, a well-to-do owner of boats and a person of some consequence. Their mother was a woman of more than ordinary thoughtfulness, and a loving mother. She was a

woman who had ambition for her sons and longed to see them in honourable places.

These two brothers became very intimate with Jesus Christ. John indeed was His very closest earthly friend. James in a day, yet to dawn, was to be the first in the band nearest Jesus on earth, to lay down his life and win a martyr's crown.

Nathanael, a quiet meditative personage, was disposed to question whether anything good could come out of Nazareth? Just as there are parts of New York and Chicago and London and Paris, that have not a good reputation, just as some little towns and hamlets are thought to be dangerous and the haunts of evil men, so Nazareth was the scoff of other towns, and Nathanael would not believe that the hope of the ages could come from it. But when Jesus spoke to Nathanael, his doubts were soon as morning mists scattered by the sun.

"When thou wert under the fig-tree, I saw thee," said Jesus.

"Nathanael answered and said unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

The despised Nazarene, you may see made from the outset a claim that no mere mortal man ever made. He was the Son of Man, but it was as God's Son, that He drew men to Him. Men of all sorts and conditions, learned, ignorant, glad, sorrowful, they came to Him at His call.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me."

Though all sorts and conditions of men freely yielded to Jesus when He bade them come, young men seemed to flock to Him, rather than old. He was a young man, and young people belonged to Him, and could not stay away. As when He was here below, so now that He is in heaven, wearing the crowns of all worlds, He specially and earnestly calls the young. He is calling you. Do not let Him call in vain.

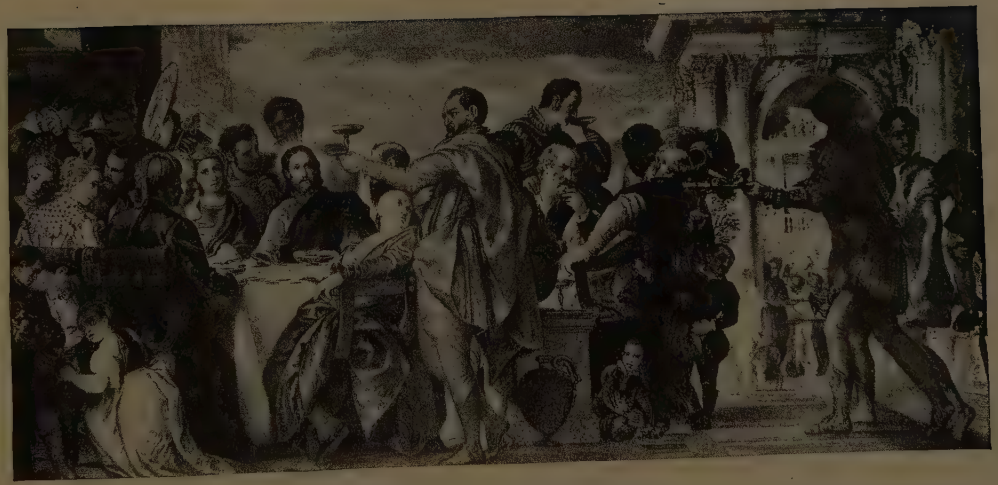
## VIII

### JESUS AS A WEDDING GUEST

I HAVE never forgotten the impression made on my childish mind by the first wedding I ever saw. The bride in her beautiful gown, the groom looking so proud and pleased, the circle of spectators, the minister, the music, the solemn ceremony, the flowers, the happy confusion of congratulations, the cake cut by the bride's hand, the merry going away of the newly married pair, are all as vividly present before me, as if that wedding of long ago, had taken place yesterday. A wedding is an occasion of rejoicing, a function to which hope and gayety belong of right. In every age and in all circumstances, weddings are associated with the gladness of the thing that begins, the thing to which the past contributes and which the future must serve. We adore a bride and our interest in weddings never wanes, witness the crowds of strangers who gather merely to watch the coming and going of a bridal procession.

Oriental marriages are differently arranged and conducted from ours, but the underlying principle and motive are the same. The bride

Jesus is often pictured with a
circle of light around his head
I cannot remember any place
in the Bible where it is intimated
that he had a circle of light around
his head.



JESUS AT CANA OF GALILEE

accompanied by her maidens and her people leaves her father's house, and the bridegroom with his retinue comes to meet her. The coronation of the function is a feast, to which all kindred, friends and acquaintances are invited, and this feast is a real merrymaking.

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the marriage. A family friend no doubt, and probably intimate, the mother of Jesus was one of the honoured guests, and her presence was regarded as a pleasure. Jesus was asked, and Jesus accepted the invitation. He did not absent Himself from the ordinary or the extraordinary affairs of life. He went freely out and in among men, as freely going to the house of feasting, as He went pityingly to the house of mourning. Some people think of the Lord as a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief and only as that. He was a many-sided Man, a Man of quick-springing sympathy with joy as well as with sadness.

I think of my Master as wearing a face so bright that when He came into any house, that house grew light and bright. I cannot think of Him as ever bringing gloom. The wet-blanket kind of Christian with the long face and perpetual frown has not caught the spirit of the Master. It must have made one

glad only to be in the same room with Jesus.

Well, the wedding bells rang cheerily and the wedding went gaily onward, until an incident occurred that disturbed the host. Is anything more embarrassing than to find that one's provision for an entertainment has proved insufficient? The wine of the country, the expressed juice of the grape, was the usual drink on a festive occasion. The host had not calculated rightly. There was not enough. No doubt the wife of the host told Mary. What were they to do? Could she suggest anything? Rachel's or Rebecca's or Hannah's marriage to be ruined by this lack, the house thus stigmatized, it was most vexatious. The good people were sadly troubled.

Mary spoke a word to her son. "They have no wine," she said. I don't know what she thought He would do, but it is evident that she rested confidently and without a fear on His power and His ability to do something.

She said calmly to the servants, Do whatever He tells you, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." It was as if *she* had authority in the house. It was certainly said and done as if she had serenest faith in Jesus, that this thing, a little thing in one way, a great thing in another, would be set right by His hand.

"Fill the water-pots with water," said the

wedding guest, who could work a miracle if He chose.

They filled them up to the brim.

"Draw out now and bear to the governor of the feast."

And they bare it.

And when the governor of the feast tasted this water, that was not now water, but ruby wine, he found it of a vintage, a flavour, a rare sweetness surpassing any he had ever tasted before.

"Some men," he said to the host, "set out the best wine first; but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Jesus was willing to use His great power of working miracles, that He might make people happy. *

Jesus did not keep aloof from places where folk had a good time. You hear people ask, "May I go here or there, may I do this or the other, if I am a Christian?" Why yes, as a Christian, you may go anywhere, if Jesus would go, there, or do anything that Jesus would approve of your doing, if He were here on the earth to-day. A Christian need not be a hermit or a recluse. Jesus mingled with society in Nazareth. He went to lend additional grace to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Go to any right place, freely, dear girl, dear boy, if Jesus will go too.

* In many places in the Bible, it is said that Jesus did his miracles as a sign - His miracles demonstrated that Jehovah was with him.

There is another thought, prompted by this story of Jesus and His kindness at the wedding. It is be on the watch always to do what Jesus bids you in the commonplace scenes of life, in the schoolroom, in college, in your mother's house, in your father's office, wherever you are. Whatsoever *He* saith to *you*, do it. Heed the whatsoever. Never mind how it may seem to you. Hear and obey. If the servants had refused to fill the water-pots with water, when Jesus told them to do so, the wedding feast would have continued to want wine. You must do your share. Jesus will do His. Heed the *whatsoever*. Especially in the *little* things!

Is there not a beautiful meaning in this miracle, one that we find, as we find the perfume of the rose, when we bend close to its fragrant cup? We may so use our commonest things that they may be changed to rarest things, so hold in our hand life's chalice of water, that it may give back to us a glow and sparkle beyond our utmost hopes.

Never need we fear any failure of provision or entertainment if Jesus be a guest or a companion on the road. ✳

> "Wherever He may guide me
> No *want* shall turn me back,
> My Shepherd is beside me,
> And nothing can I lack."

The Bible says—
"He who will live godly in
Christ Jesus shall be persecuted"
2 Because a godly person does not

It is a pleasant glimpse we have here of the home life of our dear Lord. Mary, His mother, was to have deep anguish in coming days. But, as no other mother ever had, she had joy in her beloved Son. Many days of deepest happiness were hers with her Child of Heaven, the little Child who never did wrong, never hurt her feelings, never dimmed her home sunshine. Mothers are happy when children are good and Jesus was always good. When He grew to manhood, He still made His mother happy.

Probably Jesus was never ill. We find nowhere in the story of His life any word that can lead us to suppose that He ever had the slightest taint of disease in His perfect body, * the fitting house ~~for His perfect soul~~. Other mothers watch by their children's bed of pain and fever, and are agonized by their children's moans. Jesus had a childhood immune from every malady. He had the abounding joy of health. In His manhood He could endure more fatigue than most men, and though sometimes weary, He was never once laid aside by sickness. So His mother knew the delight of having her Son always full of vigour and athletic strength as He grew into youth.

Then followed the long and quiet years of peace and purity and of loving companionship, when from twelve to thirty years of age Jesus

* Jesus body was not perfect, although he was perfect in character. I understand body and soul to mean the same thing.

was in Mary's home, satisfying every desire of her heart, the best Son mother ever had. We can see how she trusted Him from the swiftness with which she turned to Him at the wedding, when they wanted wine, and the dignity of her demeanour to the servants in that command, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

We have this record of the single wedding feast at which our Saviour wrought a miracle. But I have not a doubt that He went often to such gatherings, and that at any social company in Nazareth where His family went, He went too. He was not too busy to go where His mother wished His company, nor was He ashamed to be seen at her side.

## IX

### THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

On a green rounding hilltop, with fields stretching away beyond it, bright with lilies in bloom, Jesus sat, and His disciples gathered around Him. They had begun to call Him Master, and they listened eagerly when He taught them. What a pleasure it must have been to be in the Master's company and belong to His school! How easy to learn the lessons that fell from His lips!

Yes, we think this, yet the lessons were not very easy for some of those learners, nor are they very easy for us. Human nature is the same in every age and under every sky.

Beyond the closely clinging inner circle of friends, the Master saw a great crowd of faces, the faces of a multitude. His words were so fascinating, and His fame had gone so fast and far across that land, that people wanted to see and wanted to hear and could not stay away from Him.

And He opened His mouth and taught them saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

These verses are called "The Beatitudes," the texts that begin with "Blessed."

You know in this world we are always praising the haughty and arrogant people who refuse to let themselves be imposed or trampled on. We are very apt to consider meek and humble people as rather contemptible. Not so with Jesus. His praise was given to the poor

in spirit, and to the meek. He set a very high valuation on what we call the passive virtues. The Bible specially exalts humility from first to last, and we are warned against being self-conceited. The meek shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that mourn. Why? For they shall be comforted. To be comforted by the loving hand of Jesus, will make us forget our sorrow. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

Here is a "blessed" we may enjoy, if we will. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. When a man has been very long without food, he understands what hunger means. When he has travelled in the hot sun without a drink of water, he knows what thirst is. That kind of insistent hunger and thirst for *righteousness*, shall be satisfied.

Men sometimes hunger and thirst for power and preferment, for a throne. Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon thus felt the spur of a devouring ambition.

In ancient days, there was a lad who was the heir to a kingdom. The choice was given him. Here is the story.

"In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

"And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

* the morning — i. e. when Jesus returns.

"Now, O Lord God, let Thy promise unto David my father, be established: for Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this Thy people, that is so great?

"And God said unto Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither hast thou asked long life; but thou hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king:

"Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

Can we not imitate Solomon, and choose the course which will bring us the Master's benediction?

Of all the beatitudes the one I like best is this:

"Blessed are the poor in heart: for they shall see God."

Never let us kneel in prayer without asking that our hearts may be pure. John G. Whittier, writing a poem for a child who had been named for him, said,

"I pray the prayer of Plato old,
God make thee beautiful within.
And let thine eyes the good behold
In everything save sin."

David the sweet singer of Israel said, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The thing we should ask for is to keep the soul free from evil thoughts, to keep its weapons from rust, to be pure in heart.

In the introduction to "The Boy's Froissart" Sidney Lanier writes:

"As you read of the fair knights and the foul knights,—for Froissart tells of both,—it cannot but occur to you that somehow it seems harder to be a good knight nowadays than it was then. This is because we have so many more ways of fighting now than in King Edward the Third's time. A good deal of what is really combat nowadays is not called combat. Many struggles, instead of taking the form of sword and armour will present themselves to you after a few years in the following shapes: the strict payment of debts; the utmost delicacy of national honour; the greatest openness of party discussion, and the most respectful courtesy towards political opponents; the purity of the ballot-box; the sacred and liberal guaranty of all rights to all citizens; the holiness of marriage; the lofty contempt for what is small, knowing and gossipy;

* Plato was a heathen philosopher so his prayer could not be acceptable to Jehovah.
A child of God keeps himself free from the follies & the ballot-box

and the like. Nevertheless the same qualities which made a manful fighter then make one now. To speak the very truth; to perform a promise to the uttermost; to reverence all women; to maintain right and honesty; to help the weak; to treat high and low with courtesy; to be constant to one love; to be fair to a bitter foe; to despise luxury; to preserve simplicity, modesty, and gentleness in heart and bearing; this was in the oath of the young knight who took the stroke upon him in the fourteenth century, and this is still the way to win love and glory in the nineteenth."

Yes, and in the twentieth, and in all time to come.

There is another beatitude that is not very popular I'm afraid; it is, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

In this world of wars and tumults, the peacemakers are often discounted. But the Lord looks on them with loving favour. They are His children.* When you can reconcile two persons who are at enmity, you may claim this reward and this honour.

The sermon on the mount is not very short, but I would learn it by heart, if I were you. I committed it to memory in my childhood, and its beautiful phrases are part of my treasures.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said,

* To be a peacemaker — that alone does not make one a child of God.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

In the course of this address our Lord taught His disciples the prayer we all daily repeat. *His* prayer, beginning "Our Father, who art in Heaven." He told us that we ought not to worry. Even young people, like you do worry many times when they should carry their burdens to the dear Lord and leave them with Him.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

"Therefore, take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Consider the lilies, *how* they grow, tall, and straight and sweet and pure and brave. Cast *every* burden on the Lord.

Jesus also encouraged us to pray without a single doubt of God's readiness to answer.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;

"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

"Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

Dear friends, as often as we read the Gospel, *we* may see Jesus on the mountain-top, in that green pulpit out of doors, and hear the wonderful words that fell from His lips.

## X

### A DAY IN JESUS' LIFE

AMONG the people whom Jesus met every day there were many who were ill and suffering. Some were afflicted by evil spirits. Terrible demons had moved into their bodies as we move into a house, and had kept house therein. You may imagine what an awful thing it was to have a wicked spirit encamped in the soul. It made the person what we now call insane, and the demon on the rampage in the poor torn body would make the lips utter bad and vile words, oaths and curses, would make the arm strike cruel blows, or would drive the victim into fits of foaming fury. When our Lord was here in the world, the demon-hosts were very busy, for they feared that their hour of dominion would soon be over.

Not only this form of terrible distress was common, but another dreadful disease, one that doctors could not cure, raged in the East. This disease still exists, and is still a plague that all men shiver and shudder at in extreme horror. It is called leprosy. It is incurable as of old.

You know that in the Old Testament there is a beautiful story of a little captive maid of the Hebrews, who became a war-prize of Naaman, a great captain of the Syrians. The little maid waited on Naaman's wife, and very sorry she was when she found out that her master was a leper. She ventured to tell her mistress about the prophet in Israel who could cure people of leprosy, and Naaman, in desperation, went to the prophet, obeyed his directions, and was cured.

Leprosy was never cured except by supernatural means. Supernatural is that which is above and beyond nature. In the old days, a prophet's word and a prophet's command to dip into the waters of Jordan, drove the fearful disease away. In Jesus' day, He did no more wonderful miracle, than again and again to heal the leprosy.

A leper might live a great many years, and all the years he would be very slowly dying, now a foot dropping off, and now a hand. The malady was contagious, and lepers were not allowed to live among healthy men and women, but had to stay off by themselves, in places where other lepers lived. They stood afar off by the wayside, with cloths over their poor faces, and in their hands they held boxes attached to long poles, in which kind people dropped pence, carefully avoiding so much as

a touch of the boxes. The leper was obliged to cry in a loud voice Unclean! Unclean! so that no one would approach him.

Poor, unsightly, hopeless, pain-racked victims of a most unhappy fate, the lepers were types of those who suffer from the venomous poison of sin, and the leprosy was a type of sin itself.

Sin is as a rust eating into the very fabric and stuff of the soul. Only One, by Divine power, could heal the leprosy, and only One can conquer the power of sin.

Deaf and dumb people there were and blind people, many of the latter, in Judea when Jesus was there, lame people too, and those who suffered from burning and wasting fevers. Jesus went everywhere, casting out devils, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, restoring to the crippled their power to walk, and making the fevered sufferers well.

As Jesus came down from the mountain after preaching the beautiful sermon, He was met by a poor leper, who worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Jesus was not afraid to touch the leper. He put forth His hand and laid it very softly an instant on the bowed head, or the beseeching hands, then He said, gently, but with the confidence of a king, "I will, be thou clean."

And in an instant, swiftly, strangely, the vile malady departed. Immediately the man was aware that he was well, clean, like other men once more. Jesus had made him whole.

Jesus told the man to go to the temple, and make his thank-offering there, and commanded him not to speak of what had happened. Jesus sought no worldly fame, as earthly healers do.

Proceeding on His way, our Lord entered Capernaum, a village perched on crags steep enough for the sport of goats who leaped from cliff to cliff. The streets of Capernaum were like a rocky stairway, and the roofs of one street might almost compose a pavement for the street above.

As Jesus with His little band of followers stepped into this rock-bound place, a fortress then occupied by Roman soldiers, there met Him, deeply bending, a stately man in uniform. This was no Jew. A Roman centurion, a man governing with absolute authority his company of a hundred disciplined soldiers, had heard of Jesus. And he came to ask that Jesus would in great compassion heal, not a child, nor a father or brother, but a servant who was ill with the palsy and grievously tormented. The centurion must have had a kind heart for he loved this slave of his and sought the Master's help for him.

"And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

"The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

"For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

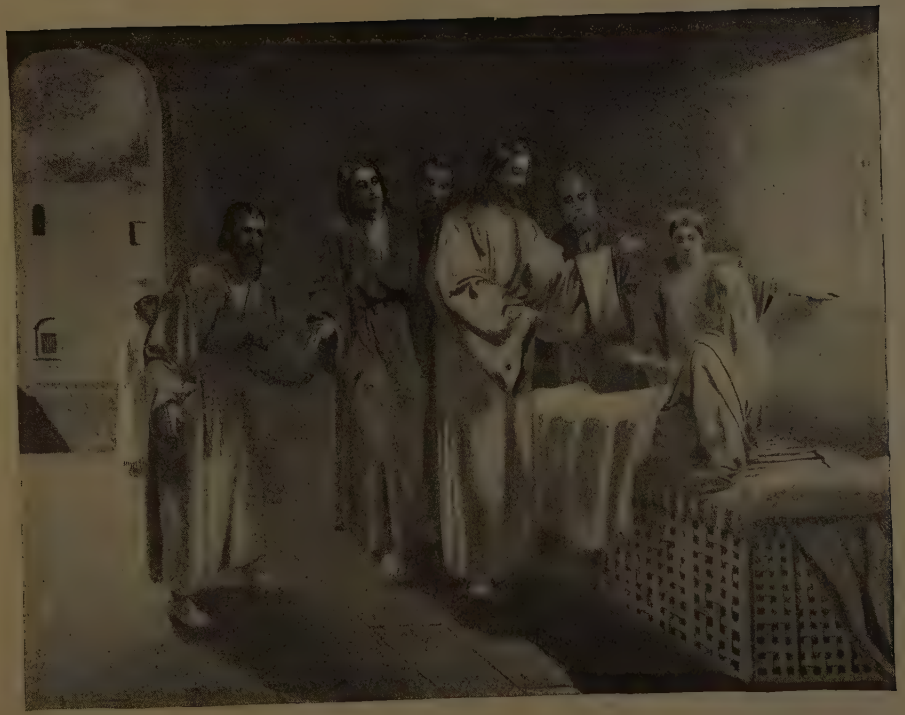
"When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

The Roman centurion and his poor servant knew the power of Christ, and Christ owned the faith of the one and relieved the need of the other.



HE TOUCHED HER HAND AND THE FEVER LEFT HER

Now the evening shadows lengthened. Peter said, "Master, you have done nothing this whole long day but make sick people well. Come into my house now, and rest awhile."

But when they reached his home, no doubt one of comfort, for Peter was a thriving fisherman, and had his own house as a place in which he could entertain his friends, they found sickness there. Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever. In an Oriental home, the oldest woman was and is the woman most honoured and considered.

"Ah, but the dear mother is ill," I can hear the daughter saying, "and oh! my husband, why have you brought a guest hither now?"

"Peace, woman," the husband would say, "the guest I bring is not like other guests. Take Him into the chamber where the mother lies."

"And He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered to them." She became at once the gracious hostess and kind house-mother. No matter that we have looked at this beautiful picture before. We may look at it often.

Night fell, and the narrow street was thronged with a crowd of people, bringing their sick to be healed, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,

saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

It is even so yet.

> "The healing of His seamless dress
> Is by our beds of pain,
> We touch Him in life's throng and press
> And we are whole again."

At last Jesus felt that He must move a little way off from the great swarming multitude, and He told Peter and the rest to get ready a boat so that they might cross to the other side of the sea. A scribe, a man of learning and intelligence, came to Him then, saying,

"Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest!"

And Jesus made the touching answer, the answer of a poor and homeless man, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

The poorest of us, has a home. Jesus was among men as homeless as any wanderer who has no roof under which he may claim a shelter. He had cut loose from the little home in Nazareth where Joseph and Mary abode, and started out on His great world work, but He was a prince without a palace, a man who owned no foot of ground, nor had gold in any purse, nor grain in storehouse or barn. Jesus

was as poor as the poorest tramp who has no abiding-place, yet He was as rich as heaven itself, and at many a moment angels stooped to wait on Him.

"And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

"But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me: and let the dead bury their dead."

This little scene rather puzzled me when I was a child, but the meaning is simple. *Let the dead bury their dead* is a form of saying, "Life and present duty come first. You say you want to follow Me, but your father is old and he needs you now, and you can't come with Me while he lives." The answer is that you will better care for the loved one, if you do right now and follow Jesus in the way.

A great many of us make one or another excuse, rather than drop everything and begin the Christian life without an instant's delay. We are only half in earnest, and Jesus knows it.

> "Act, act in the living present.
> Let the dead past bury its dead."

Take this as the rule for the Christian life.

"And when He had entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him.

"And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep.

"And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord save us: we perish.

"And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

"But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!"

So ended one day in the life of Jesus, a busy day, a day when Nature itself in its winds and waves, owned His power and grew silent at His voice. Was there ever a day of greater absorption, a day of less opportunity for repose in any human life?

## XI

### THE LAD WITH THE LOAVES

THAT word *multitude* so often repeated conveys to my mind an idea of crowds surging upon crowds, as when in summer, one stands on the shore and watches the breakers rolling in. Wave upon wave they come, and far out on the ocean you look and lo! another wave is rushing in upon the land, and back of that another rises, and behind that another, the white horses of the sea. So was it with the multitudes who followed Christ.

"Come ye apart to a desert place, and rest awhile," Jesus said to His disciples. A desert or lonely place might be a green or flowery meadow; it did not always mean a barren waste, but it did mean a spot of retirement, out of the noise and clamour of the streets, and away from the bustle of the markets and the homes of men.

Young people sometimes do not realize it, but every life must have its silent hours or it will not grow. In the morning and the evening of each day we have urgent need of a little while with Jesus. How thoughtful and kind of the Master to go with His disciples when they

were tired, not to send them away from Him.

There was always a boat ready when it pleased Jesus to wish for one, and with the sail spread, it would carry Him and His friends swiftly across the blue waters of Galilee, to the pleasant place they sought. Around the curving shores they floated, and drew to the land. But what was this? What meant the crowds waiting to welcome them when they stepped on the beach, and the crowds as far as the eye could see? What had happened that men, women and children, by twos, by threes, by dozens, were patiently awaiting them, or coming into view, having plodded on foot around the lake?

The desert place could be no retreat that day. For the multitude wanted to be near the Master. Here was Hannah, whose fever He had rebuked. Here were Nathan and Lemuel, to whom He had given sight. Here was some one who could hear after long deafness. Others too, Joseph, Salome, Rachel, Joshua, men and women unnamed in record, but present in the crowd, each with a personal reason to get close to the wonderful Teacher, each, with those who were in some need of help, each longing for more of the wisdom and comfort His words gave, had patiently walked the miles around the lake, and found the place, and were

here to receive whatever blessing the Lord would bestow.

Some people would have been vexed to discover that they could not secure rest and repose when they so desired it. Some would have been angry at the persistency of the multitude. Not so, Jesus. When He saw the procession coming from every town and village till the crowd was like a cloud of locusts, He was filled with compassion. They seemed to Him as sheep that had no shepherd.

I have had the realization of the crowds, densely gathering towards one centre, and massing there, in a great city on some occasion when there was a vast ceremonial, or a function in honour of a visiting potentate from abroad. Sometimes on the East Side of New York, on a Sabbath afternoon, the moving throngs of people, drifting through the streets between the tall houses, have made me think of those crowds, that multitude, near the Sea of Galilee, in the days when our Lord was on earth.

He was sorry for them, sorry for the weary, footsore, dusty, hungry men, for the crying children, for the mothers who sank down exhausted.

The disciples were sorry too. "These foolish people," they said, "have brought no food with them. The day is far spent, the night is

at hand. Send them away, Lord, that they may buy themselves bread."

"They need not depart," said Jesus.

The disciples could not believe their ears. The next words nearly paralyzed them.

"They need not depart," was amazing enough, but when Jesus calmly said, "Give ye them to eat," they exclaimed with surprise!

How should the twelve feed an army? They had no provision except a very slender one for themselves; surely they could not relieve the hunger of even a few on the edge of the crowd. Nevertheless, Jesus spoke with the serenity of royalty, "Give ye them to eat."

It happened that there was a lad there, an eager-eyed bright little fellow, who had brought with him more than he required for himself, five loaves and two little fishes. For loaves, substitute biscuits, these loaves were tiny, not large, and think of *little* fishes, like smoked herrings or sardines.

"Make the people sit down," said Jesus.

They sat down, in orderly waiting companies on the green grass. And the day was far spent. The sun was going down. The shadows were long on the velvet slopes. There was supper to be served by the sea, abundant, excellent, a feast, all out of five little loaves and two little fishes.

Jesus looked up to heaven and blessed and brake, and gave to His disciples, and they gave to the multitude. Never again, if ever you have done so, begin the simplest meal without a word of thanks to God and a word of prayer for His blessing. Jesus said grace before meat. He brake, and brake, and still in His hands, the loaves were multiplied, so that the supply was more and more. As Jesus broke the bread, there was bread enough and to spare, the very fragments of that supper by the sea, filling twelve baskets, one apiece for the twelve who carried to the multitude what the Master divided.

Precious forever is the memory of the lad with the loaves.

And forever precious is the lesson of that hour. We may be in straits, we may not see a step before us, but if we love and trust Jesus, He will safely bring us through, and feed us by the way. Not to assuage His own hunger would Christ command bread to be made from a stone, nor did He change the pebbles on the strand into food. He took the bread human hands had made, and human hands had brought, and of it He made a rich and sufficient entertainment for a multitude. Five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed in that twilight hour, from five little loaves.

"They need not depart, Give ye them to eat." Jesus still tells us this, when the crowds are near us, and their hunger is for something more needful than material food. If we begin with the little we have, His love will surely make it enough.

## XII

### THE RAISING OF THE RULER'S DAUGHTER

MANY a time in those beautiful years, Jesus raised the sick from their beds of pain.

Sometimes friends brought those who were too ill to walk, carrying them for miles and miles over the dusty highway. Jesus would look with His pitying eyes on the man who was lying there, pallid and gaunt and helpless, and would say, "Take up thy bed, and walk. Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

It used to be a great puzzle to me how a man could take up his bed, for I had when a child, the familiar bedstead, of carved wood or wrought metal in my mind, and the ponderous springs and the mattress, and the blankets and quilts and pillows before my thought. But I learned after awhile that an Eastern bed was a very simple affair, a mere rug, that could be rolled up and carried away by any able-bodied person. One word from the lips of Jesus made the weakest man as strong as he had ever been in his whole life. Part of the strength too, came from the blessedness of knowing that his sin was forgiven.

To a man who knew that he had wandered far away from God and purity, who had lost the approval of conscience, and fallen into a habit of doing wrong and yielding to his own will, it must have been a joyful surprise, to hear that his sins were forgiven.

I have no doubt that whenever Jesus looked straight at such a man, a desire for pardon awoke in the man's soul, and there came to him an awakening, a vision of his own wretched state.

In the Revelation, our Lord spoke from the skies to a character that has always been very common in the world.

"Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

Put the emphasis on the two words, *knowest not.* When our Lord gazed on any one of the suffering men who came to Him for healing, the man *knew* his sinfulness, and knew his whole past unrolled before those eyes that read the soul like an open page. His whole nature cried out for pardon, and pardon was granted, and then followed health and peace.

Once in a great crowd, when everybody was pushing and pressing, and there was not room to stir, a poor woman edged through the midst of it, and just laid one timid finger on the

hem of Christ's garment. She did not ask to be made well, though she had long been very ill, and was very much discouraged. Doctors had done her no good, and she had spent all her money in trying various cures.

Nobody dreamed that Jesus could raise the dead. But a father's love rose to that height of faith, and leaped to a certainty that Jesus might break the frozen sleep of death.

"Be not afraid," said the Master to His men; "Only believe."

The crowd was left behind. Jesus went to the man's house, he happened to be a ruler, taking the three disciples who were His most intimate friends, Peter, James and John. According to Eastern custom, when they reached the house, they heard the voices of those who mourned, a wild, wailing noise, that sounded far down the street.

Jesus hushed this wild clamour with a gentle word.

"Why do you weep and make this ado? The damsel is not dead, but only asleep."

At this, the people laughed in derision. But Jesus put every one out, except the father and the mother of the little maid, and with them and the three disciples, He entered the room, and went to the couch, where the silent figure lay.

Perhaps you can fancy how she looked, her

dark eyes shut, the long lashes lying on the death-white cheeks, the dark hair parted from the white brow, the little hands clasped.

Jesus advanced and stood beside her. He took one little cold hand in His own. He spoke and the room was hushed in its awe and suspense. The mother knelt, her tears flowing quietly. The father's eyes were fixed on the Man who held the dominion over life and death, in His majestic hands.

"Daughter, I say unto thee, Arise." Then an amazing thing took place.

The child, about twelve years old she was, opened her eyes and smiled into the kind face that looked upon her. Her cold hands grew warm, a flush crept into her cheeks, she smiled at her father and mother. She stepped from her bed, perfectly well.

About this time, people began to whisper to each other, asking what mystery was here, that a young man who had made chairs and tables in a carpenter's shop in Nazareth, whose father and mother and sisters and brothers they knew, should be doing such wonderful works, and speaking such wonderful words.

When the Sabbath came, and as His custom was, Jesus entered the synagogue, and taught, they did not heed the message, for they were criticising the messenger. God's own Son from heaven could not bless human hearts that

DAMSEL, I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE

barred their door, and refused to listen when He spoke. So, their unbelief drove Him away. He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

They were offended at Him, and met His gentle teaching with scoffing, forgetful and ungrateful that they were, for among them must have been those whose sick He had healed, and those whose hunger He had fed beside the sea. So He left them and went away saying,

"A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin and in his own house."

Jesus could do no more mighty works in Capernaum, for the unbelief of the people prevented Him from exercising His power.

Jesus is still prevented by us, in the same way. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me."

But He never forces Himself, into a barred heart's door, against the heart's will. He knocks. We must open.

Do not let us, dear reader, act like those foolish people of Capernaum. Jesus can do wonderful things for you and me, if we will let Him in.

"If Jesus came to earth again,
And walked and talked in field and street,
Who would not lay his human pain,
Low at those heavenly feet?"

Ah! dear ones, ~~He is here, now~~, and we may go to Him with every thought and every care.

## XIII

### WHEN JESUS WALKED ON THE SEA

Our Lord often sent His disciples away from Him, and retired into a mountain apart to pray.

Sometimes He spent whole nights on the hills in prayer.

We think of prayer as asking for what we want, either for ourselves or others. This is one kind of prayer and it is very needful for us, but it is not the only kind nor the highest kind. There is a sort of prayer that is communion with God, that leads one to think so much about God, that one feels very near and close to Him. Jesus communed with God. I do not see how He could have endured all the sadness and the pain of living among wicked people, and the giving out of His vital power to make people strong and well as He did, unless He daily received fresh strength from His Father in Heaven.

The disciples learned to know the look in His face, when He left them and went away to talk with God. They did not intrude on those hallowed hours when Jesus withdrew to some hillside sanctuary and remained there

for hours to pray to God and commune with heaven.

One day He had tarried long in the deep green forest, and night had fallen and yet He had not returned. At last He came down to the shore. Away off in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, He saw a fishing-boat. The disciples were in it and they were rowing heavily against wind and tide, and making little headway. The Sea of Galilee, mountain-rimmed as it was, had its fits of fury, when the gales tossed it, and the waves were capped with foam. Out there on the sea, the disciples had no fear, for they were hardy men, used to the moods of their sea, but they longed to get to the shore, for they thought the Master would be there, waiting for them.

Shall we read the story as Matthew tells it?

"And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitude away.

"And when He had sent the multitude away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone.

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

"And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

"And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.

"And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

"And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."

The fourth watch of the night would be towards morning, just the time when tired people are most tired, and fainting people most faint. I imagine how those storm-tossed

mariners felt when they saw that kingly figure walking the billows as one might tread upon a smooth floor. They were much alarmed, and supposed it was a spirit that came gliding over the waters. But Jesus spoke. They could not fear when they heard Him say, "Do not be afraid. It is I."

A child is never afraid if it hear in the darkness its father's voice. A friend has no terror when a friend hails him on a gloomy road.

"It is I," said the Master. Then in that fishing-boat there was joy touched with wonder.

"Lord," cried Peter the impetuous, "if it be Thou, let me come to Thee on the water."

Had not Jesus said, "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid."

Peter could have led a forlorn hope or stormed a garrison at those words, they put such courage into him. He waited only a second and Jesus said, "Come!"

Peter sprang over the boat's side into the boiling depths, and bravely started, walking on the water, to go to Jesus. And if he had kept his gaze on Jesus, and had not looked on the plunging waves, nor listened to the whistling of the wind, he would have walked on victoriously. But presently Peter lost sight of that splendid figure, walking so calmly towards the ship, lost sight of all but himself, a

mere waif and atom, tossing hither and yonder on the waves, and he was afraid.

Once we are afraid, we begin to sink. It does not make much difference where we are, or what we are doing, fear makes us craven. The faint-hearted fly before the enemy. The man who is afraid, as Peter was, because he does not see Jesus, is sure to sink.

But Peter did the best thing to be done. He called in a loud voice, not to the people in the boat, but to the Master on the sea, "Lord, save me! I perish!"

The cry was heard and answered. Jesus stretched forth His hand, caught Peter, and said, reproachfully, "Oh, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

The wind ceased when they were in the ship, and the ship's crew worshipped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth Thou are the Son of God!"

Morning dawned in a flood of glory as they stood in the land of Gennesaret, and for Jesus it was another busy day. Hundreds sought Him for healing, hundreds tried just to touch the hem of His garment, and He turned not one away.

## XIV

### JESUS AND THE SABBATH DAY

ONE of the things Jesus did on the Sabbath day was to go to church. The church He attended was called a synagogue, or a place of meeting, and we read that He often went into the pulpit, took the book of the law from the hands of the minister, and explained it Himself. I am full of awe when I think that there have been people in the world who have sat in a church on the Lord's day, and heard the Lord tell in His own clear and beautiful way what the Heavenly Father wanted them to know and to do.

Yet, though to-day you and I may not see His face, nor touch His hands, nor hasten with reverent faith to follow Him out over the Galilee roads, and through the lilied fields, we need never enter a church without meeting Him there. He is present in reality in every place where Christians gather to pray and to praise.

Jesus did not think it right to profane the Sabbath day. He kept it holy. God's rest-day was very precious to our Master. He gave it the old sweet name, hallowed and fragrant,

the name given it in the garden of Eden when the Lord rested after creating the world.

I like the name Sabbath for the Lord's day very much better than I like Sunday. The latter with Monday and Wednesday and Saturday, has a heathen origin, and the Sun's day, the Moon's day, Woden's day, Saturn's day, all recall some ancient and picturesque mythology. But the Sabbath is the Scripture name, and it conveys to me a thought of silence and of melody, of grasses waving softly, of children studying the Bible, of homes hushed and peaceful. Henry Ward Beecher used to say that the Sabbath looked different from other days, that it had a cattle-on-a-thousand-hills look all its own.

Jesus did not hesitate to perform works of loving kindness on the Sabbath. When He was here the good people of the period had grown very formal in their piety, and they attached too much importance to mere outside ceremonies. So, when Jesus and His disciples were walking through a field of corn, one Sabbath morning, and the disciples being hungry, plucked the ears of corn and ate them, the strict observers of the law, known as Pharisees, were ready to find fault. They had long been trying to find fault with Jesus, but in that pure life and that loving speech of His, they could not pick a single flaw. But they pounced on

the poor disciples crying, "Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

"And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;

"How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shrewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

"And He said unto them, that the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The synagogue was very full that day. The men sat together, chanting the psalms and responses: the women were by themselves, as they are now in a Jewish worshipping assembly. Never had the young Teacher been more kingly, never had His voice been sweeter, nor His presence more full of power. Yet those who were gathered there, knew that Jesus had worked in the carpenter's shop, and that His brothers and sisters were plain men and women, like anybody else, none of them with heaven's light on their faces, as this Man had.

"In the shop at Nazareth
Pungent cedar haunts the breath;
'Tis a low Eastern room,
Windowless, touched with gloom.
Workman's bench, and simple tools

Line the walls. Chests and stools,
Yoke of ox and shaft of plow
Finished by the Carpenter
Lie about the pavement now.

"In the room the craftsman stands
Stands and reaches out His hands.
Let the shadows veil His face
If you must, and dimly trace
His workman's tunic, girt with bands
At His waist. But His hands,
Let the light play on them
Marks of toil lay on them.
Paint with passion and with care
Every old scar showing there,
Where a tool slipped and hurt,
Show each callous; be alert
For each deep line of toil.
Show the soil
Of the pitch, and the strength
Grip of helve gives at length.

"When night comes and I turn
From my shop where I earn
Daily bread, let me see
Those hard hands; know that He
Shared my lot, every bit;
Was a man, every whit."

The Man who taught those people in the synagogue was a working man, a man who had eaten the coarse fare of the poor, and known the hard lot of those who toil all their days. The hands that held the book of the law before the hushed assembly had held axe and saw and plane. Since then, those hands

had taken other toil and grown soft, had been laid on many a hot cheek and fevered brow. The other day they had broken five little loaves, piece by piece, and fed five thousand men. Those feet, in the peasant's sandals, had trodden mile upon mile, and always on errands of mercy. The other night they had walked on the sea as on a floor.

The fame of Jesus had gone far, and it had begun to arouse evil passions, envy, jealousy, spite, malice, in the breasts of men who would never be famous. Learned men, some of them, scribes, who knew what illiterate men, who had never gone to school knew nothing of: Pharisees, ~~good men~~, pious men, but alas! proud of their goodness and puffed up over their piety. These men hated and suspected Jesus, hated Him without a cause. Beside His spotless purity they knew their garments were stained, and resented the knowledge.

They began to watch and furtively they cast glances at the Teacher, and at one another. They hoped He would soon do something which would give them the handle against Him that they sought.

In the synagogue that day there was a man who had a withered hand.

Jesus saw that man. The scribes and Pharisees saw him too. They watched like wolves scenting their prey, hoping that Jesus

would heal the poor man but not because they pitied him. Jesus knew their thoughts. Their hearts were an open book in His sight. He reads all hearts now as then. Evermore we may look up to Jesus, and say, "~~Thou God~~, seest me!"

To the man with the withered hand Jesus spoke,

"Stretch forth thine hand!"

The man obeyed. And as he obeyed health poured into the helpless arm, it was instantly restored, paralyzed no longer, useless no longer: it was a right hand with the right hand's might and skill and strength as of old: a *whole* hand, like its fellow.

"Is it lawful," said Jesus, looking round at the scowling Pharisees, "to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath day, to save life or to destroy it?" And they could not answer.

Our Lord kept holy the Sabbath. So should we keep it holy. On the Sabbath He worshipped His Father in the great congregation. So should we. On the Sabbath He studied God's Word, all of the Bible He had. We have a larger Bible than Christ had. On the Sabbath we should study it reverently. Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath. We may visit them then.

Another instance is given of our Lord's kindness in healing a woman who had been a

sufferer for eighteen years, from a dreadful infirmity which bent her nearly double. She crept about, bowed down by her great pain and weakness.

One Sabbath day she was sitting in the synagogue. I suppose she had gone there without the least expectation that a great blessing was coming to her that day. Eighteen long years had so burdened her in soul and body that she had forgotten to hope, and forgotten how it felt to be well. She was in a good place.

Jesus saw her. He called her to Him. Feebly she approached, hardly daring to lift her eyes to that benignant face. He said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."

"And He laid His hands on her and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

Here too, one would have looked for great rejoicing from all around. On the contrary, the ruler of the synagogue was most displeased. He exclaimed with indignation, "There are six days when men ought to work. In them therefore come and be healed and not on the Sabbath day."

But our Lord saw that the man was not sincere, that he was a hypocrite. Hypocrite means play-actor, a person assuming a part that is not genuine.

"The Lord answered him and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

"And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

"And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

You must have seen how very tenderly Christ regarded those who endured physical pain. If ever you are ill, you may be sure that He will come in and stay with you, and comfort you, and that He will guide the physician and nurse who are caring for you in sickness. So whether you recover and go about your duties again, or instead, ~~go home to the land where nobody is ever ill, all will be right.~~* In heathen lands, the missionary physician does the sort of work our dear Lord did in ministering to the many who are sick. Some of our missionaries treat, as the Lord did when here, great crowds of helpless patients, attending to thousands of sufferers in a single year, to hundreds of thousands in a lifetime.

One would indeed have thought that every heart in those assemblies would have leaped

* When one dies they go to the grave No one is rewarded till after they are resurrected † no one is resurrected till Jesus returns to the earth.

for joy when some poor cripple stood restored by the word of Jesus, a man able to do a man's work, where he had been dependent on charity; a woman again useful in her family.

Alas! hatred makes blind eyes and deaf ears and hard hearts. They were not glad. They were sorry. Human nature is very deceitful. Jealousy is cruel as the grave.

About this time, the first faint muttering was heard of that tempest of furious wrath that fell upon the Master, farther on in His earthly life.

The common people clustered around Him and gladly heard His words. But the scribes and Pharisees, and the priests who were a class by themselves, began now to hold aloof from Christ, to lay plans to entrap Him.

Calmly He walked among them, aware of the evil in their hearts, never afraid of them, doing good to the multitudes, and at night communing with His Father.

## XV

### JESUS TRANSFIGURED

If you should ever visit the Holy Land, you would fix your eyes upon Mount Hermon, standing to-day as in the days when the Master was on earth, as a lofty throne among encircling peaks. No mountain in the world has upon it the seal of such glory, as once, on a summer day, crowned Mount Hermon.

Jesus had been talking very earnestly with His disciples. As usual He had performed miracles of healing. For the second time, He had fed the multitude from a small provision, dividing seven loaves among four thousand people, as at first He had divided five loaves among five thousand. Again upon the eyes of the blind He had laid His gentle hands, and the blind man, looking up saw the trees and fields and people as others did whose sight had never failed. Coming out with His disciples, through the towns of Cesarea-Philippi, He asked them what report they heard of Him from the people they met. They answered, "Some think that you are John the Baptist, others Elijah returned to the world, and still others look upon you as one of the

old prophets come back." Then He said, "But tell Me what you think; you who are with Me all the time, walking about, living with Me, hearing My words, whom do you think that I am?"

Peter, who was always the first to speak, said instantly, "Thou art the Christ."

At this time Jesus began to teach His disciples something that was very hard for them to learn. As a father about to go away on a journey would give his children directions concerning his absence, trying to fit them for the new responsibilities that must be theirs, so Jesus now began to explain to the disciples that His mission to the world could not be accomplished until He had suffered many things at the hands of wicked men, and had been rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes. He told them too, in plain words that He would be put to death, and that after three days He would rise again from the dead. Over and over, as teachers impress lessons on the minds of little children, Jesus told His disciples these things about Himself.

Everything that had been predicted of Jesus ages before He came to the world, was soon to be fulfilled. Isaiah, the prophet, had said of Him,

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

"He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken.

"And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in His mouth."

The disciples were incredulous, for they simply could not understand what Jesus meant, and Peter took it upon himself to remonstrate with the Master, telling Him that He ought not to speak of the future in this way. But the Lord looked reproachfully at these friends who did not accept His words, and sternly rebuked Peter.

Then calling together the people and His disciples, He said to them,

"Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

"For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

These words of Jesus mean to us just as much as they did to those who first heard

them. If we would follow Christ we must deny ourselves, and be ready to take up our cross and walk in the narrow path that He marks out. Some of us like to wear a golden cross, some of us have in our rooms the emblem of the cross, garlanded with flowers. But the real cross we carry for Jesus is not one we display. It is a cross of daily self-denial, of doing things we do not like to do, of bearing with people who are unkind, of overcoming our cowardice, and of showing forth Christ's love in a world that does not love Him.

It is sometimes a cross for a young girl or a lad to stand up before a congregation and become a member of the church. I have often heard young people say that they can be Christ's without doing this, yet this is the simplest way in which they can let others around them know that they belong to Jesus, and are His disciples.

It is quite worth while for every one of us to ask ourselves, "What shall it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our own soul?"

It was six days after this little sermon that Jesus, looking up to Mount Hermon, asked Peter, James and John, the three who were nearest to Him in friendly intimacy, to climb its steeps with Him. They went up into this high mountain apart by themselves, the Master leading the way, the three disciples following.

There the most wonderful incident that had ever taken place in human history was witnessed by these three fishermen of Galilee. Their Master standing before them, put on the majesty that He wears to-day as He sits at the right hand of God. His raiment became white and shining, dazzling as the snow when the sun falls on it; whiter than any whiteness ever seen on earth.

As the three disciples gazed spellbound, they saw that their Master was not alone. Standing beside Him on the mountain's brow were the two greatest prophets of the Old Testament, the two whom Israel most revered, Moses the great lawgiver, and Elijah the great reformer of the ancient days.

You remember that when Moses died, he breathed his last breath in sight of the promised land, into which he did not enter, with only the Lord Himself to smooth the dying pillow.

"On Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale of the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man dug that sepulchre;
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there."

Elijah had been caught up to heaven in a

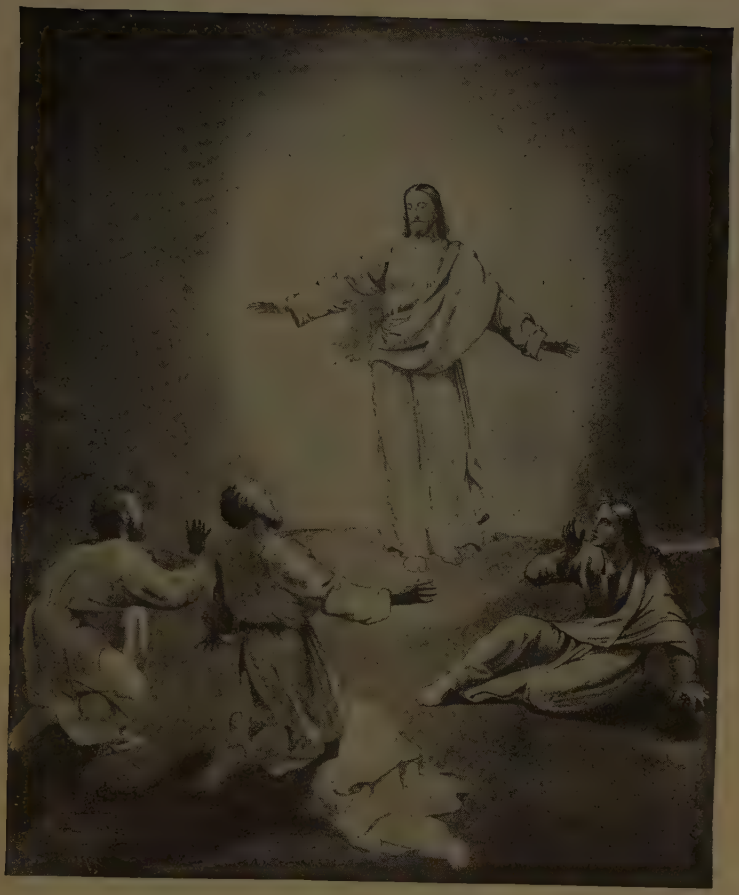
chariot of fire in the sight of Elisha, his pupil and friend, on whom his mantle had fallen. These ~~two~~ men ~~for many ages had been living in heaven~~, and to-day they returned for a brief space to the earth they had left, that they might talk with Jesus about what He was doing here in the world, and what He meant to do before He left it and ~~came back~~ to them in heaven. ~~The scene is very comforting to us when we think how our dear ones pass out of our sight into the eternal home~~. They go as ~~they might go into another room with only a door between us and them,~~ a door that God's finger could easily open if ~~He chose to set it ajar.~~ They talked with Jesus, these two, who had come from heaven, and He talked with them, while a little way off the three disciples in dumb amazement stood and looked on at the strange meeting.

Saint Paul speaks of the whole family in heaven and on earth, and here on Hermon is an illustration for us of a family meeting; some from that world, some still in this, all on the same mountain-top.

Again Peter was the one first to speak, and he exclaimed, addressing Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here, so let us make three tents; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." No one seems to have paid attention to this request of his, which must have

sounded very much as a child's comment thrown into the conversation of older people. Even as Peter spoke there came a cloud from heaven which wrapped itself around the mystic three, shutting them from the sight of the trio of disciples, and out of the cloud came a clear voice saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." The cloud lifted, the disciples looked round about, but no one was there any more except Jesus with themselves. As they went down the mountain, He told them that this event had been witnessed by them, but that they were not to speak of it to others, but to remember it until the Son of Man should have risen from the dead.

It often happens in our experience that when we are on some mountain-top of great gladness, we suddenly plunge from it into a depth of deep grief. There are people who foolishly distrust a very bright day, or a prosperous gale, so sure are they that its opposite in wind or storm is marching quickly to meet them. This time when the disciples still in the exaltation they had felt on Hermon, stepped down its lower levels to the plain at its foot, the Master in the midst, they found a great confused multitude there, many of whom ran with joy to Jesus when they saw Him. In the midst of this multitude was a poor youth, torn by a wicked demon, and the father had



THEY SAW NO MAN, BUT JESUS ONLY

Some think at the transfiguration Moses represented those of the faithful who are dead when Jesus returns to the earth — and that Elijah represented those of the faithful who will be living when Jesus returns.

brought him to Christ's disciples who had been trying to cast out the vile spirit. But they had not been able to do so. The poor father said to the Lord, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us."

Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." At once the father cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." At this Jesus charged the evil spirit to come out of the boy, and with one last struggle, the spirit did so, leaving the lad lying on the ground as if dead. Jesus lifted him up, and he arose and went home with his father.

From this time our Lord constantly repeated in the ears of the disciples, the tale of the future. Over and over again He said, "The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day."

One feels surprised that in the face of such teaching as this, Jesus coming back to Capernaum should ask His disciples what subject they had been discussing by the way, and they should have to tell Him, that they were trying to settle which of them should be the greatest in His kingdom. I think He must have sighed when He said to them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last

of all, and servant of all." Then He took a child and set him in the midst of them, and lifting the little one in His arms said, "Whosoever shall receive one such child in My Name, receiveth Me."

This was Christ's beautiful lesson of humility and love.

At another time our Master gave His friends a still more striking object lesson in humility. In eastern lands where men wear sandals, they must bathe their feet to free them from the dust of the road when they enter a house. A servant's office is frequently this, to wash the feet of his master and his master's guests. On one occasion, Jesus took a basin of water, and a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. Peter remonstrated, but Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me."

Then He said, "If I, your Lord and Master have stooped to this lowly service, and have washed your feet, ought you to be proud and haughty, ought you to refuse to do anything that love may bid you do for one another?"

Jesus *always* set the crown on humility.

## XVI

## SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME

Our Lord was, you may be sure, never one of those cross looking people who frighten children away. Children came to Him with confidence, and mothers were anxious to have their little ones receive His blessing.

One day when Jesus was walking with His disciples, a group of women surrounded Him, some with babes in their arms, others with small children tugging at their skirts and toddling beside them on the road. I can see the dark-eyed, sweet-faced little ones, and the eager, wistful mothers, pressing closely about the Nazarene.

The disciples thought this incursion of women and children on the time and attention of their Master, a piece of great folly, and they spoke sternly to the mothers, saying, "Take these children away. We have no time to spend on you or them." Jesus did not say this. He rebuked His disciples, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the king-

dom of heaven!" * And into His own kind arms, He took the little ones and blessed them.

"I think when I read that sweet story of old
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children like lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
That His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have heard His kind voice when He said,
Let the little ones come unto Me."

"Verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." What are the characteristics which Jesus loved in children, and why did He say that they were nearer the kingdom of heaven than older people who have lost the child-heart? For one thing, little children are trustful. They believe what their parents and teachers say, and their little minds drink in knowledge, as the flower-cups catch the dew and rain. They are obedient. Their part in life is not to give orders, but to do as they are told. The sweetest and dearest little children are those who love to obey in school and at home. Children have nothing to worry about. They have daily bread, and daily duties and plenty of time to play and clothes to wear. In the morning they begin a beautiful new day. At

* The emphatic Diaglott has it— To such as these belongs the Kingdom of the heavens"— i.e. such— in humility.

night they are tucked up safe in bed and the day ends with a mother's kiss. They say,

"Now I wake and see the light
'Tis God who kept me through the night,
To Him I lift my voice and pray
That He would keep me through the day,"

and in the evening this is their little prayer,

"Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

They early learn the prayer our Lord taught His disciples,

"Our Father, who art in Heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us ~~not into~~ away from temptation and deliver us from evil
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
Forever, Amen."

Our blessed Lord might have come to this earth of ours as a Prince with a vast retinue, as a General leading an army, as a Statesman to whom all bowed down. But instead, He put great honour on childhood when He came as an Infant, helpless as any other little one in

a mother's arms. All through His early years, He was a loving and obedient Child, a pattern for all children in the wide world until time shall be no more.

Children are pleased with little things. Grown up people may be dissatisfied and captious because their plans go wrong, but children live in a beautiful land where grains of yellow sand are better than golden coins, and flowers in a daisied meadow are worth more than the treasures men most prize. Blessed beyond all others are the men and women who keep to the end of life the sweet and trustful spirit of childhood.

Jesus once said to His disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." I think we do not understand this fully until life has taught us some of its lessons. But let me explain to young people that they have only to remember certain days when they were out of tune with every one, and certain other days when their aim was to make every one happy, to know precisely what our Saviour meant. Let us believe that we have the kingdom of heaven within us, and say daily with the children,

"Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so."

The consciousness of belonging to Jesus brings heaven into every heart.

To go a step farther. Suppose that day by day we stop at intervals, and send a prayer up to the Lord for heavenly calm amid agitations. You and I might say, "What would Jesus do if He were here? What would He wish me to do, to be?" Younger or older, let us be as children in His service.

Jesus is still extending His arms to encircle you. He still says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

And still the most blessed of all people, even if they have silver hair, are those who have kept the child-heart in touch with Jesus, through the years.

Here is another thought for you. Jesus blessed each little child. He does not look at you as if you were a stranger. He knows who you are, and where you live, and what your name is. When you have had a hard time over your lessons, and have been discouraged, it is worth while to tell Him. When you have made a mistake, when you have had a disappointment, tell Jesus. The greatest wisdom in the world is to tell Jesus everything.

Begin serving Him while you are a child, and do not wait until you are grown up before you join Christ's Church. There is room at His table for you. There is room in His

heart for you. "Feed My lambs" He said to Peter, and "feed My lambs" He says to His servants now.

It is very comforting for us to remember that Jesus showed His great tenderness to and regard for childhood.

After He had been transfigured upon the mount, and when He was facing day by day the coming of the time when He should go to Calvary, after He had blessed the children and was going on His way, a young man came running to Him and kneeling before Him said, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said, "Why callest thou Me good? There is but one good; that is God. Thou knowest the commandments." The young man said, "Master, all these commandments have I observed from my youth."

We are told that Jesus looking on him, loved him. He looked into his heart, as He did into all hearts, and there He saw that there was one thing of which this young man was making an idol, one thing that came between him and eternal life. The young man was very rich, and took great pride in his possessions and estates.

Jesus said, "Although you have kept the commandments and been just, and although you have done what you thought was your

* by "lambs" — Jesus meant his — brethren.

duty, there is one thing yet to do; go and sell what you have and give to the poor. Instead of earthly treasures you shall have treasure in heaven. Go take up the cross and follow Me." But the young man did not want to do this, and so he lost all chance of the kingdom, and went back to the things of the world, and did not follow Jesus in the way.

## XVII

### JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY

JESUS of Nazareth! He was passing by a little town called Nain one day, and there met Him a very mournful procession. A few friends walking beside a bier, on which lay the body of a young man, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Blinded with tears, covered from head to foot by her thick veil, the desolate mother tottered along the path. If only she too could die and be laid in the tomb beside her boy! Heart-broken she groped along.

The little procession, accompanied by the mourners, weeping and wailing, emerged from the city gate. But a kingly stranger arrested its progress. "Halt!" cried a voice that none ever heard without heeding. They who carried the bier stood still, and Jesus said to him who lay upon it, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" Instantly the sleep of death was broken. The man awakened into life, stepped from the bier, and went home with his mother.

Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And a woman, not of His people, a woman of an alien

race, came crying and entreating Him to cure her daughter who was terribly afflicted. He seemed, as it was not His wont, to hesitate, to hold back, to refuse, but soon He listened to her petition and granted her request, granted it because of her persistence and her faith.

Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. The villages knew it, and the fringe of the cities, and from each wayside hamlet men, women and children hurried for a glimpse of Him. He was talking with His disciples, and when He smiled, it was as if the sun came out, and made the whole day gladder.

By the roadside sat a blind man begging. He heard the tramp of many feet, and the murmur of many voices, and he asked of those around him, "Who is this that is coming with so much stir?"

"It is Jesus the Nazarene," was the answer.

"Oh, hurry and take me to Him," cried Bartimeus, the son of Timeus. "Take me to Him." But no one moved hand or foot. There were hundreds of blind beggars in Palestine. The Jericho road swarmed with them. Why should any one trouble?

"Stop this outcry! What do you mean by making such a disturbance?" exclaimed those nearest the blind man, as he shouted and called, "Let me get nearer, nearer the Nazarene!"

Then louder yet he lifted his voice till it rang

like a clarion over the mingled voices of the multitude, imploring and beseeching,

"Jesus Thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And Jesus heard and stood still. He waved away those closest to Him. He commanded and the crowd divided on either side, as the Red Sea when the Hebrews went through it dry shod. A narrow lane through the parted throng was speedily made, and kind hands led the blind beggar straight to the presence of the King.

"Be of good cheer," they had said. "Take comfort. Rise, He calleth thee."

The blind man left behind him his outer cloak that would encumber him with its folds and trip his feet, and in his tunic only, he stood before Jesus.

"What wilt thou, that I should do unto thee?" asked the Master.

"Lord," said the blind man, "Lord, that I might receive my sight!"

Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Once, Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and a deputation of men came from John the Baptist to speak with Him. The fiery prophet no longer addressed repentant multitudes, for the wicked Herod had shut him up in the strongly

guarded prison, where, later he was to die by the sword. Dim glimpses, faint rumours penetrated that prison, and John's sturdy soul in its day of depression half doubted whether indeed the Man he had baptized in the Jordan was the Christ of God.

"Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" asked the disciples of John, sent by John to bring him a report.

"Go your way," answered Jesus, "and tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, and to the poor, the gospel is preached."

Again Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and He said to a man sitting at the receipt of customs, "Follow Me!" The man was a publican, a tax-gatherer, hated by every one, for men of his class were extortioners and robbers, but he rose up, left his old life, and followed Jesus.

Again Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and a little man who could not see over the heads of the crowd, climbed into a tree, to have a better view.

"Zaccheus!" said Jesus, looking up, "make haste and come down from the tree, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Wonderful deeds Jesus did, as He walked over hill and dale with His friends. Once He

gave sight to a man who was born blind. All the man could say afterwards, when Christ's enemies jeered, was, "Whereas I was blind, now I see!"

Sometimes I fancy there were men and women who lived in lonesome places, a good way from the travelled roads, to whom there came echoes of what happened in Capernaum and Samaria and Judea. News would be brought by a neighbour who went to Jerusalem to keep a feast, or by some venturesome youth who could not stay contented at home, and went forth to buy or sell in a distant market.

In such secluded homes the mother and daughter grinding at the mill, or baking a cake upon the coals, would say to one another, "Oh, that Jesus of Nazareth would pass by!"

"If He should," the daughter would murmur with a pathetic anxiety, "He would cure that pain of yours, dear mother, and make you well again."

"It is little matter about me, daughter," I can hear the mother say, "but perhaps He would give your father his sight again. Poor father, he can distinguish objects no longer, he dwells in the darkness. I hear that your Uncle Simeon who has been blind for ten years, can see as well as ever in his life since the Healer laid those hands of magic on his poor blind eyes."

And now and then it happened that Jesus forsook the beaten paths and walked through the untrodden byways, and when He did so, the timid folk who shunned crowds, made crowds of their own to hear His voice and look into His face. For that was a day marked with a white stone, when Jesus of Nazareth passed by.

Jesus of Nazareth passed by a fig-tree that ought to have had fruit, but instead had nothing to show but leaves. A tree of fair promises, but few performances. "No man eat fruit of thee henceforward forever!" said Jesus, and went on. When on the morrow the disciples passed the tree, it was a dead tree, withered from the roots. That fig-tree is an object lesson for us. A tree is known by its fruits. If we have no fruit to show for Christ, and only empty vows that we easily break belong to our record, we too may wither away. The law of growth is the law of life. The law of growth is the law of fruit-bearing.

The wind in the olives is crisp to-day,
The white caps ruffle the tossing wave,
And the feet of the Shepherd who came to save
Are treading the dust of the world's highway.

He is seeking the lamb that has wandered far,
He is climbing the hills that are rough and cold,
He is seeking the lost in wood and wold,
And calling it back beneath sun and star.

Have you heard them cry that He's coming near?
Then hasten out and be swift to greet
And kneel before Him and kiss His feet,
For 'tis heaven's own love that has brought Him here.

Friend, would you walk on the Jesus' road?
Then hearken, for there you must walk with Him,
He may come at noon, or in twilight dim,
Let Him rest in your heart, as His own abode.

## XVIII

### BY THE WELL OF SAMARIA

WELLS and springs and rivers and fountains play a very important part in the Eastern lands. The women come to draw water in India and Syria to-day, as they did in the time of our Lord, and as in the time of Abraham. Often there are meetings for friendly talks at the well, where the neighbours linger in the cool of the evening, or in the early morning.

A well was a jealously guarded and cherished piece of property in the history of Israel, for a pastoral people could not get on without water for their cattle, and the herbage grew green and rank only where there was refreshing moisture in the earth. In the Old Testament allusions to wells are frequent, and a father once gave certain springs to his daughter as a wedding-present, a present greatly prized, as a house and lot, or a diamond tiara, or ancestral heirlooms might be with us. When Abraham sent his servant, Eliezer of Damascus, to seek a bride for Isaac, it was at a well that the stately messenger had his introduction to the beautiful Rebekah.

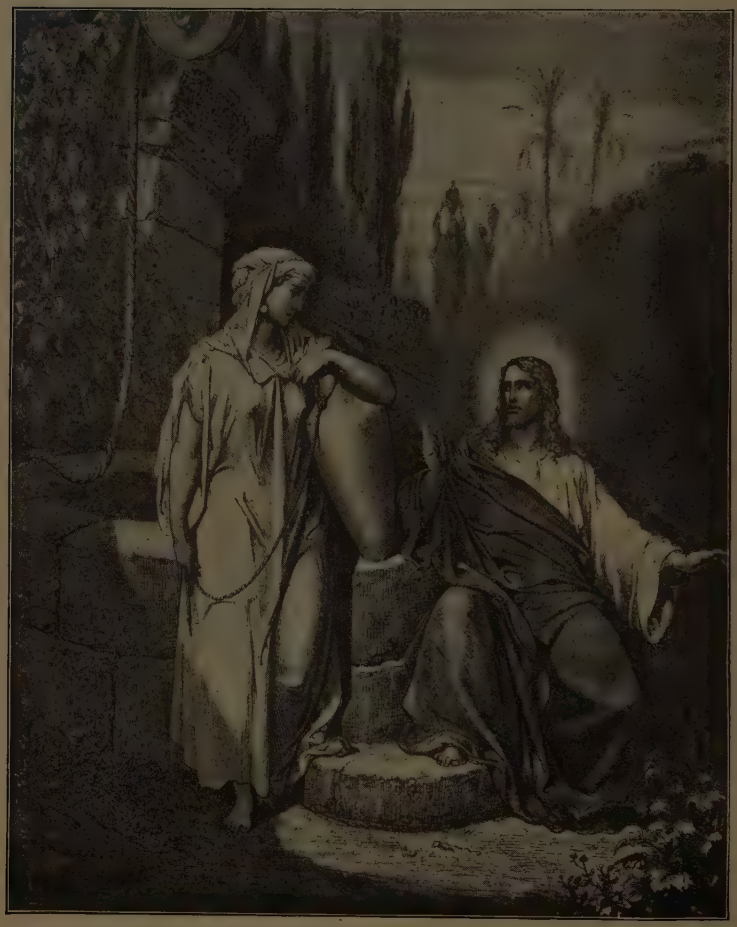
In the first Psalm we are told that the righteous man shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and in the twenty-third Psalm, we read of green pastures and still waters. The plash of cool waves and the ripple of flowing streams, make melody for us all through the dear old Book.

There came a day when Jesus, having been in Judea, determined to go back to Galilee, and to do this, He must needs go through Samaria.

No swiftly gliding railway train from Jerusalem to Capernaum in the days of Christ. No stage-coach had its route with relays of swift horses. Travellers went on foot, or rode on slowly plodding mules or donkeys; only the very rich jaunting about perhaps in chariots that were lofty and notable for their rarity. Our Lord made His pilgrimages through the Holy Land, holy to us because it was His land, on foot, wearing sandals as other foot travellers did, and faring through sun and dust and heat for many a weary mile.

We never read that Jesus was ill, and I do not think He ever was. His body, as I have said, was a perfect home for His sinless soul. But sometimes He was tired.

He came to a city of Samaria which was called Sychar, near that ancient parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.



BY THE WELL OF SAMARIA

Here was Jacob's well, a deep, exhaustless well that had satisfied the thirst of man and beast for generations. Who did not love to drink from Jacob's well?

High noon had come.

A wayworn traveller, Jesus sat down to rest by the well, and presently there came a woman of Samaria to draw water.

An old feud, dating back to remote ages, separated the Jews and the Samaritans. They had no dealings with one another. The Jews beheld the Samaritans with haughty scorn. The Samaritans regarded the Jews with aversion and distrust. A Jew seldom addressed a Samaritan if he could help it, and this fact gives point to a parable of Jesus, the story of the good Samaritan, which we will read before long.

"Will you not give me a drink of water?" said the lonely stranger by the well, to the woman who came from the city with her pitcher in her hand. His disciples had left Jesus to rest while they went away to buy food.

The woman did not immediately grant the stranger's very natural request, but answered His question by another.

"How is it that thou, a Jew, askest drink of me, a Samaritan?"

In reply the man said an amazing thing.

"If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink, then wouldst thou have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

"Sir," said the woman, greatly astonished, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From whence hast Thou this living water? Our father Abraham gave us this well. He drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle."

"He that drinketh of this water," said the stranger by the well, "shall thirst again, but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life."

So they talked beside Jacob's well, the woman who had her sinful past and her story of trial and trouble behind her, and the Man, in whose face shone a peace that was like heaven's own light. They talked, and talked eagerly, earnestly, and when the disciples returned with the food, they found their Master weary no longer, but so refreshed that they thought that some one had ministered to Him in His need. Refreshment had come to Him in ministry to a sorrowful and sinful woman, to her kinsmen and her friends.

For she had hastened homeward and brought them back with her and had said, "Come.

Down by Jacob's well there is Somebody. I can't tell you who He is for I don't know, but He is a prophet, and He has told me everything I ever did."

Many of the Samaritans who heard Jesus tell of the living water that day, believed in Him and became His followers.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold I freely give
The living water; thirsty one
Stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream.
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."

These Samaritans, when they accepted the words of Christ, accepted them wholly. They said to the woman who had led them to the well that sultry afternoon, "We believe that this is the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Jesus left them and went northward, until He arrived at Cana, where He had turned the water into wine. Soon after He met a nobleman of the country, in great distress and journeying fast, hoping to find the great Healer, for at home he had a son very near death.

"Sir," said this man, bowing low before the Master, "Sir, I pray Thee come to my house, and restore my son."

"Go thy way," said the Master, "thy son liveth."

News it seemed too good to be true, but it was true. Our Lord went back to His own country, and the nobleman returned to his house. On the way there, a servant came running with the happy tidings that the lad was well.

Beautiful stories these of One who once walked and talked, ate and drank, rested and toiled among men. True Son of Man! True Son of God! For God so loved the world that He sent into it His only Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.

The lovely thing about it was that people in trouble never stopped a moment on the way to Jesus. They went straight to Him. Nobody was afraid of Him. Nobody sought Him in vain.

Nobody need be afraid of Him now. Nobody now need seek Him in vain.

"For still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in His love.
And if I thus earnestly seek Him below
I shall see Him and hear Him above."

## XIX

### JESUS AT THE FEAST

WHEN the yearly occasions came to summon the people of Israel to Jerusalem, Jesus too, in His Manhood as in His Childhood, went up to keep the Feast.

The spirit of the devout Hebrew had not changed since David wrote, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces."

When the Jews had been carried into captivity in Babylon, their hearts always turned very wistfully towards Jerusalem. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down: we wept when we remembered Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

Through all the centuries since Christ was here on the earth, as in so many before He came hither, the Jew has uttered this plaintive cry. Driven like a leaf before the autumn wind, chased from land to land, the people to

whom Jesus came, of whose race He was, whom He loved as His very own, have been exiles and sufferers through a long series of years. I am sorry that Christians too often forget the debt they owe the grand old Hebrew people, forget too that our Saviour was born in Judea, of the line of David, and that He owned Abraham as His Father.

Jesus never neglected any religious duty that belonged to Him as a Jew. So He went to Jerusalem to keep the feasts, especially the Feast of the Passover.

He would have said, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let My right hand forget her cunning, if I do not remember thee, let My tongue cleave to the roof of My mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above My chief joy."

I can imagine our Saviour as He approached the beautiful city, glorious as a dream of heaven, enthroned among the mountains, exclaiming, "I will lift up Mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh My help," and adding, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever."

Dazzling as a vision in snow white and gleaming gold, the vast temple was the goal to which the pilgrims turned their reverent eyes.

Again, on the Sabbath day, Jesus stood in Jerusalem, and on the way to worship God, in the solemn assembly. He passed a certain pool, called Bethesda. It had five porches or entrances, and was near the sheep market, where were sold sheep and lambs for the sacrifices of the Temple service.

In the porches that led to the pool, lay at all times a great number of impotent folk, patiently waiting for an angel, who, tradition said, at certain seasons, disturbed the pool. When the sluggish depths of that pool were ruffled by the stooping to its waves of a shining angel from the sky, whoever first stepped into the water was cured of his plague.

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

"And the impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

"And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath."

Again, the Jews were angry because on the

Sabbath day the Lord of the Sabbath had wrought a miracle of healing. He met their reproaches calmly, but with a statement, even more boldly uttered than before.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Now it was, that openly and shamelessly there were Jews who sought to kill the Christ. They were full of malice and wickedness and murder was in their hearts. But they could not kill Jesus then.

His hour had not yet come. These Jews swung to and fro like a pendulum in their moods, one day wanting to take Jesus by force and make Him a King, the next trying to entrap Him and find some good reason to put Him to death.

About this time, the Lord addressing those around Him said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am the bread of Life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger. He that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

Even those who were next of kin to Christ turned away from Him when He spoke such words as these. I am sure His mother listened and believed, and that His friends, Peter and James and John, had some faint glimmerings of what He meant, but many were vexed, and turned away because they were vexed.

They did not understand what Jesus would

convey when He said that He was the Bread of Life. They were like children trying to unravel a puzzle to which they had no clue.

As bread enters into our bodily lives and gives us strength, so Christ entering into our souls, gives us strength for every hour. He is the Bread of Life.

Again, our dear Lord said some other wonderful words.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

"This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.

"Then Jesus said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.

"As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

"Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down,

and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

This passage ought to be committed to memory by every one who loves Jesus Christ. It is like a cluster of diamonds sparkling with rarest lustre.

Are we indeed of those whom the Good Shepherd claims as His very own? Have we heard Him call us by name? Then we may fear no foe, for,

> "Our Shepherd is beside us
> And nothing can we lack."

Here, distinctly, and in the plainest terms, Jesus said that as the Good Shepherd, He would lay down His life for the sheep. No man should take it from Him. He would lay it down of Himself. "I have power," He said, "to lay it down, and to take it up again."

Here Jesus declared Himself the Son of God. No mere man could do what He promised to do, lay down His life, and take it up again. Reading this verse, well may we with Faber exclaim,

> "O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord,
> Forgive me if I say
> For very love Thy sacred Name
> A thousand times a day.

"For Thou to me art all in all,
My honour and my wealth,
My heart's desire, my body's strength,
My soul's eternal health."

## XX

### JESUS AND PRAYER

I AM sure that no one who studies the life of our Lord can fail to notice how much time He spent in prayer. You and I spend a little while in the morning and evening, and we may be hurried in the one end of the day, and tired in the other, so that we do not give our whole hearts and minds to what we are saying. People may repeat prayers and think of something else. Wandering thoughts insult God, for when we come into His presence the least we can do is to bring our full attention with us. Jesus was often known to go alone to pray, and He spent hours under the stars in converse with His Father.

Jesus had no sin to confess, so in one particular His prayers were very different from ours. He needed not to seek the pardon of sin. We cannot pray without begging forgiveness and acknowledging the wrong we have done, and bewailing the right we have left undone.

Jesus spoke directly to His Father as friend to friend. We ask for Jesus' sake. Jesus

prayed continually for others, making prayers of intercession. We too may do this.

Some things Jesus taught us about prayer. He said it was asking. "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

There are those who do not take the trouble to ask God for a blessing, who are too dull to seek His gifts, and who never knock at heaven's gate. They lead prayerless lives. They are no better than the cattle feeding in the pastures, not so good, for the "ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master's crib." It is no wonder that the secrets of God's love are hidden from such heedless souls, too indolent to pray.

Jesus told us that we must persevere in prayer. A man had gone to bed one night, and shut and barred the house, and was wrapped in slumber when there came a loud knocking at his door. "Open, open," cried a voice, "and lend me some bread, three loaves if you have them. A friend of mine on a journey has stopped with me, and I have no food to set before him."

"Go somewhere else, won't you?" calls the drowsy man, hating to be disturbed. "I have closed my house. It is bolted and barred. My children are asleep. Go away. I cannot rise and give you bread."

But the outsider is wide awake and refuses to leave. And says Jesus, "because of his importunity he receives what he wants." The lesson for us is to be importunate in prayer.

"There is a place where spirits blend
And friend holds fellowship with friend.
Though sundered far by faith we meet
Around one common Mercy Seat."

Jesus tells us when we pray, not to stand in the street or on the corner or in the market, but to enter into our closet and shut the door, and pray to our Father who seeth in secret. The Moslem prays audibly and conspicuously wherever he happens to be when from the mosque falls the call to prayer. The hypocrites in Jesus' time prayed loudly to be heard and seen of men. Heathen nations to-day have praying-machines into which poor deluded worshippers drop their meaningless prayers written on scraps of paper.

Prayer should be the cry of faith from man's soul to God's. The most earnest prayers are made when one is in solitude.

"Two men," said Jesus, "went up into the temple to pray." One, a Pharisee, recited before God the story of his virtues, how he kept the commandments, how he gave tithes of his possessions, how he fed the poor. The other, a poor publican, stood afar off, and beating on

his breast had only one petition, but it was sincere. "God be merciful to me a sinner." We have the word of Jesus for the result of the publican's prayer. God heard it, and sent him comfort and peace. Before honour is humility.

You want your father to let you go on a journey, or take an advanced course in college, or enter on some field of business. You take the natural course of telling him your wishes and asking him to gratify them, and that is prayer. We may go to God in that same simple way.

I heard the other day of a girl who had drifted into a false position through over-impulsiveness, and who was very much embarrassed and distressed. She came in tears to a friend, saying, "What shall I do?" The friend said, "Tell your father. He will set the matter straight. That is one thing a father is for, to rescue a child when she is in a slough of despair and pull her out to firm ground again."

If you and I have somehow lost our bearings, and are astray in a far country, we may find our way back by telling our Father. Pray without ceasing, is a little text easily learned by heart. Does somebody say that it is impossible to do this? Not at all. One may be in an atmosphere of prayer, as the plant in the

greenhouse is in an atmosphere warm with sun and beaded with dew. Whenever you feel an inner impulse, tugging at your heart, bidding you pray, then and there, if you are like Jesus, you will send a thought of prayer up to God. It will fly swifter than light or lightning straight to His throne. No telegram carries messages so surely as the wire, unseen, and everlasting, that reaches from every human soul directly to heaven.

"Hello, Central," when the telephone was a novelty, said a little child, "Give me Heaven! I want to say my prayers!"

But you don't need "Central" to give you heaven. You have only to send your prayer from a heart that longs for help, and the prayer will be answered.

The Holy Spirit teaches us what we ought to pray for, and how we ought to pray. No Christian child or man asks anything of God, without saying, "Thy will be done."

Jesus set us this example too. "Not My will," He said to His Father, "but Thine be done."

In the Christian Endeavour parting song there is a thought I hold very dear.

"God be with you till we meet again,
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Daily manna still provide you,
God be with you till we meet again."

A traveller in the desert, the width of the world between him and his loved ones, wrote home that on a Sabbath morning, in the midst of the great silence, he suddenly heard the church-bells chiming in the New England valley, and the sound of the choir singing. Somehow to his soul's ear these happy notes were borne, he could not tell how, but he felt that as he prayed and sang a hymn, he was joining in the worship at home.

Thus we meet at Jesus' feet whenever we pray, our petitions going up to God, with those of dear ones still on earth, but, it may be, out of our sight for awhile. This is a pleasant phase of the Christian life. We may be divided by time and space, but we are near one another in the dear Lord's care.

HIM THAT COMETH UNTO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT

## XXI

### JESUS AND PARDONED SIN

One of the complaints frequently made by the Pharisees and scribes, was that Jesus drew around Him people whose lives were sinful. There was in our Saviour, an endless pity for those who did wrong, and He was always ready to forgive them, and win them to pardon and peace. No one needs to be told that those who willfully commit sin never have peace of mind or joy in their hearts. They never know what is before them. They are misfits everywhere. Sin itself is like a black blur over the sunshine of the universe. One cannot be happy in sin.

The publicans and sinners, people who had strayed far from the path of right, were never afraid to come to Jesus. A sweet attractiveness for them was in His benignant face. Let us look at some of His teachings, thinking of Jesus as the Friend who pardons sin.

Being a guest in the house of a chief Pharisee who was not treating Him with the friendliness and honour required by good manners in a host, Jesus uttered this parable. He

knew that the Pharisee did not love Him, and had invited Him from some unworthy motive.

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

"But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

One of those who sat at the table with Jesus said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." In the midst of those proud Pharisees Jesus sat, an object lesson in His own Person, of the beauty of humility.

When He left this home, He was followed by very many persons to whom He spoke words of cheer and comfort. It was at this time, in reply to the murmuring of the Pharisees, because He received sinners, and ate with them,—that He said, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice

with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

In the Highlands of Scotland, where the mists suddenly fall upon the mountains, like a shrouding veil, a traveller once stopped at the door of a little house, nestling in the shadow of a great hill. Night had fallen, and the traveller had lost his way. The candle in the window dimly shining through the darkness, had guided him to the door, and he knocked and was admitted. He found the family in great trouble, for the man of the house had not come home, but was away somewhere on the mountain paths, looking for a lost lamb. Toward morning, tired but joyful, the shepherd came home with the little lost lamb safely tucked within his plaid. He had not minded the cold, nor the darkness, as he had looked for the little creature that had wandered away.

Our Saviour told us that just this sort of joy there is in heaven over one wandering child who finds the way back, and as the lost one cannot find the way back himself, the Shepherd goes to seek for it. Don't you like Bonar's hymn,

"I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
I would not be controlled.
I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home,
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam.

"The Shepherd sought His sheep,
The Father sought His child,
They followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er deserts waste and wild:
They found me nigh to death,
Famished and faint, and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love;
They saved the wandering one."

Jesus gave a further illustration of the readiness of the Lord to pardon a repentant sinner, by telling of a woman who had ten pieces of silver and had lost one. She would not be contented until she had found her lost coin. She would light a candle and sweep the house, and look in every nook and corner until she found her treasure. Often in those days, a woman's whole dowry was contained in the few pieces of silver which she wore as a necklace. If one of these was missing it was a very serious matter to her, and those around Jesus would understand at once with what thoroughness and diligence she would search until she recovered her property.

Again Jesus said, "I say unto you, there is

joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Not the joy only of the angels, but the joy of the Lord Himself, before whom the angels bow. Such search as the woman might make for her coin, the Lord would make for His precious one.

After this, still talking to a company, composed partly of Pharisees who were watchful and suspicious, and partly of those who are called in the narrative publicans and sinners, people who made no pretensions to be better than they were, and many of whom were numbered with those who led doubtful lives, Jesus told the incomparably beautiful story, of the Prodigal Son.

"A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

"And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into the fields to feed swine.

"And he would fain have filled his belly

with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

"And he said unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

"And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

"And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

This story is sometimes explained as meaning that the elder son was a type of the Jew, and the younger, of the Gentile. But I do not think for us it needs any explanation beyond this, that the Father is always ready to receive and welcome the child who has gone astray no matter how far, if only the child will come home, confess sin, and show a willingness to begin over again.

There is no limit to the forgiveness of Jesus,

who is ready to forgive the sinner to the uttermost.

One of the disciples once questioned Jesus about earthly forgiveness, saying, "Lord, if my brother sin against me, how oft shall I forgive him: till seven times?" And the Lord answered him, "Not till seven times, but until seventy times seven:" showing that we must forgive those who have offended us, not once or twice, but over and over again.

"How many sheep are straying,
Lost from the Saviour's fold!
Upon the lonely mountain
They shiver with the cold;
Within the tangled thickets,
Where poison vines do creep,
And over rocky ledges
Wander the poor lost sheep.
O come, let us go and find them,
In the paths of death they roam;
At the close of the day, 'twill be sweet to say,—
'I have brought some lost one home.'

"O who will go to find them?
Who, for the Saviour's sake,
Will search, with tireless patience,
Through briar and through brake?
Unheeding thirst or hunger,
Who still, from day to day,
Will seek as for a treasure,
The sheep that go astray?
O come, let us go and find them,
In the paths of death they roam;
At the close of the day, 'twill be sweet to say,—
'I have brought some lost one home.'"

## XXII

### LORD IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE

JESUS and His disciples were lingering in Galilee when there came to Him a message that a friend named Lazarus was very ill. The home of Lazarus was in Bethany, a little village not far from Jerusalem. Here in the family of Lazarus who lived with his sisters, Martha and Mary, Jesus was often received as an honoured guest. The message sent by the sisters to Jesus, was very tender and touching, "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." We are told that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He did not then go to him, but stayed for two days in the place where He was. After which, He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples thought this an unwise proceeding. They said, "Master, the Jews are very unfriendly. Of late they have sought to stone Thee. And goest Thou thither again?"

The answer which Jesus gave is one that we may all give when there is a duty or danger before us, or work that must be done. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any

man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," He said, "but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

The disciples thought that sleep was a good sign in illness, and they said, "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well." But Jesus was speaking of His friend's death, calling it sleep.

In the Roman Catacombs, over the graves of the early Christians, little children, young maidens and people grown old, the legend is found again and again, "Our brother sleeps," "Our sister sleeps."

Heathen religions regard death as the end of all. Christ's religion speaks of death as slumber from which one wakens in the morning.

Jesus seeing that they did not understand, said plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."

Among the disciples there was one of whom we shall hear something interesting at a later period. His name was Thomas.

Seeing that Jesus desired to go to Jerusalem Thomas said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

They all felt that the shades were gathering around their Master, although they did not comprehend that this was what He expected,

was indeed the reason of His being in the world. But Thomas gave his pledge of love and loyalty when, anticipating the martyrdom of Jesus, he wished to share it.

By the time Jesus reached Bethany, Lazarus had been lying four days in the grave. Friends of the family were sitting in the desolate house trying to comfort the desolate sisters. Somebody running in, said, "Jesus of Nazareth is coming with His disciples." Immediately Martha left the company of friends and went out to meet the Lord, and Mary sat still where she was. The temperament of these two sisters was different, one being quick and energetic and impatient if obliged to be quiet, while the other was gentle and tranquil, and not very apt to take what we call the initiative in anything that was to be done. It was like Martha to go forth to meet Jesus, and like Mary to wait in the house until He came. When Martha met Him, her first words were those of tender reproach. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." Thus she gave a proof of faith which has never been surpassed. She went on to say, "I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."

Jesus said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again."

"Yes," replied Martha, "I know that he

shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Then it was that Jesus said the words which have been the consolation and strength of Christians through the ages; said them first to a woman, mourning for her dead. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Instantly came the response from Martha, "Yes, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Turning from Jesus, Martha went back to the house and quietly called Mary, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Mary arose quietly, and in her turn went to Jesus. She too, sank down at His feet saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The mourning company who had been in the house had followed Mary, supposing that she had gone to her brother's tomb to weep. They all stood there a company of grieving people surrounding Jesus.

Presently He said, "Where have ye laid him?"

"Lord, come and see," said the sisters.

"Jesus wept.

"Then said the Jews, behold how He loved him.

* Those "living," who are worthy, when Christ returns. — "shall never die."

"And some of them said, Could not this Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even Lazarus should not have died?

"Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, he hath been dead four days.

"Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.

"And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot in grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."

In this most beautiful story there are one or two features which never fail to touch our hearts. The little verse, "Jesus wept" is only two words long, but what a comfort to think, that just as we pour out our grief in tears, so Jesus loving His friends, wept with them in their hour of sore distress.

We notice too, that Jesus took for granted that His Father in heaven had heard Him in the prayer that He made before Lazarus came forth from the tomb. When He awakened Lazarus, it was with the command of a King. No wonder that those who saw this strange sight at once believed on Jesus.

The only ones who were disturbed and very indignant at this miracle were those bitter enemies of our Lord, the chief priests and Pharisees who were jealous of the power of Jesus, and of His increasing influence. They gathered themselves into a council and said, "This thing has gone far enough. We must stop it. This man from Nazareth performs so many miracles that there is no knowing where He will end. If we let Him alone, before very long every one will believe on Him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

Whoever said this knew that he was speaking falsely with the intention to stir up a feeling against Jesus, for the Romans even

then, had taken possession of Judea, and the nation paid tribute to Rome, although the Roman policy did not interfere with the religion of any people whom they conquered.

Caiaphas, the high priest, boldly put forth the idea that it would be well that Jesus be put to death. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

"And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

"Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.

"And Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples."

All these wonderful things that we have been learning about our Lord took place in three little years. We have now reached the third and last year of Christ's public ministry, and we are coming to the hour, when for the last time, He should go up to Jerusalem and keep the Passover.

## XXIII

### THE SISTERS OF BETHANY

JESUS was on the footing of a dear family friend in the home of Lazarus and his two sisters. He came there when tired that He might rest, and He was so sure of His welcome that He never needed to send word beforehand. There was room for Jesus in that Bethany home, and He could never find them unprepared to receive Him.

Soon after the raising of Lazarus there was a joyous gathering of friends and kindred to celebrate his restoration to life. They were invited to a supper and great pains were taken to make the supper worthy of the occasion. It was a feast, and the Guest of honour was the Master who had called back Lazarus from the dead. Never was a feast so bright and glad.

Our Lord saw plainly just before Him the darkness of the cross. Yet His presence cast no shadow on this home festival. Jesus knew how to put His personal grief and care in the background that He might make others happy.

I have heard of Christians so morose and melancholy that people shunned them. They

JESUS IN THE HOME AT BETHANY

are not like Christ. He walked through the world with cheerful courage.

"I don't want to go to heaven when I die," said a little fellow. "Not if grandpapa'll be there! He'll keep on calling out Hush! Hush!"

When Jesus went to a dinner or a supper, He laid no spell of gloom on those who sat at the table. They were only more happy than they had ever been before.

As I have already said, the sisters of Bethany were not very much alike. Jesus does not ask His friends to be a uniform pattern, like candles run into the same mould. He wants you to be yourself, and me to be myself. He never chides the daisy for not being a tulip, or asks the lily to turn into a rose. He loved both sisters in the Bethany home though one was of the bustling and peremptory order of women, and the other was silent and thoughtful in contrast.

Martha, the elder sister, was the lady of the house, the mistress and caretaker. She has long been considered a type of the practical woman, the woman of affairs, the woman who knows how to manage servants, and entertain company, and spread the table with delicate abundance. In Martha's house, let it stand where it may, everything is tidy. Dust does not lurk in corners, nor do cobwebs hang from the wall. Martha keeps her closets in order,

and exacts scrupulous attention to system from all beneath her roof.

People sometimes speak a little slightingly of Martha of Bethany, because Jesus once tenderly reproved her, saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Just as many a housekeeper that we know is cumbered or borne down by service. Martha was at times over-particular, over-anxious, and over-wearied, so that some of life's best things passed her by, while she was occupied with second-best things. But she was, nevertheless, a good and gracious woman, and a loyal friend of the Master, His devoted hostess and conscientious supporter.

Mary, the sister of Martha, was of a different type. She was dreamy and imaginative, what we call a mystic. It did not matter to her whether the bread was baked on the coals to the right tint of brown, nor whether the meal was ground at the moment it was wanted. Her pleasure was to sit at Jesus' feet, and listen while He talked, drinking in His words of wisdom, and forgetting the whole world in the bliss of loving Him. "Her eyes were homes of silent prayer."

"Mary," said the Lord, "has chosen that good part that shall not be taken away from her."

We find it hard to understand but the real

things are generally the things we cannot see. The real things are pity and love and truth and generosity; they outlast the chairs and tables, the works of men's hands. The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal.

Mary's whole fortune was invested in one treasure. Men have invested a fortune before now in a pearl or a diamond, a rare cup, a cameo, a picture; some precious thing they coveted.

Mary had a jar of fragrant ointment, costly and rare. It was her one possession, most valuable, most beautiful.

Jesus was sitting at meat when she broke this jar of fragrance, and poured it on the Master's head. There were churlish lookers-on who murmured at Mary's extravagance. "Why break it?" they said. "Why not scatter a few drops of the perfume?" "Why spend it all in an instant?"

Their wrath growing bolder they vented it in the hearing of the Lord Himself.

"It might have been sold," they said, "and the price of it given to the poor."

Jesus heard them and smiled.

"The poor ye have always with you," He said, "but Me ye have not always. This woman hath come beforehand to anoint My body for its burial. Wheresoever in the

world this story shall be told, it shall be a memorial of her."

"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

Yet when these friends at Bethany came out to greet Him, they gave Him of their best. Our Master knew the pleasantness there is in being a guest where friendship is unstinted.

There is a profound truth in that sentence of Jesus, about the poor who are always with us, and the constant commonplace occasions when we may do them good, and the other unusual occasion when we may do some big and splendid deed for Him. We never know when we may have it in our power to break our alabaster box that Jesus may be honoured.

Perhaps among those who are reading this page, there is a girl who is laid aside from the activity of life. She cannot do much for her King. One such girl I think of, who tripping down the village street one day, stumbled and fell. She has not walked since, though years have passed. Patient, winsome, cheery, but chained to a chair and a couch, she sits beside her bit of a window, and looks out on the country road. For each passer she has a smile. Girls run in on their way from school to chat with her, and tell her their little trials

or triumphs. Hard-working matrons slip into the house in the gloaming that they may rest in the room where this young girl sits, suffering but never complaining.

Little things please her. A flower gives her exquisite delight. A poem cut from a newspaper stirs the song in her heart. In her ceaseless gentleness and quiet loveliness, this young girl who is a shut-in, breaks day by day her alabaster box, as Mary did, that her Master may be glorified.

As Martha did, as Mary did, in that Bethany home, shall not we ceaselessly serve Jesus, and try to entertain Him in the Bethany of our hearts?

## XXIV

### HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID

THE thought of the coming kingdom pressed continually upon the minds of the disciples. We see this as we find that again and again they returned to that question in their talks with Jesus. Peter said one day, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed Thee. What shall we have therefore?" Jesus held out no promise of worldly reward, but told him that when the Son of Man should sit on the throne of His glory ~~in Heaven~~, they should find their reward then, and that every one who had forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for the Name of Jesus, should receive a hundredfold, and inherit everlasting life.

The mother of Zebedee's children, with a mother's love for her sons, one day asked of Jesus a certain thing. "What wilt thou?" He graciously said. She answered, "Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left in Thy Kingdom."

Jesus looked at her sorrowfully. Her sons

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

were James and John who so often accompanied the Lord on His journeys to and fro, and who shared so much of His confidence.

He said unto them, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said to Him, We are able.

Jesus said to them, "Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father in heaven."

Naturally the other apostles were very indignant at the ambition of the two brothers, but Jesus took that occasion to give them all a lesson in humility. He said, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,

"Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

In the lives of James and John the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled, for James was the first to lose his life for Christ's sake among the twelve apostles, all of whom except John died by a violent death, witnessing with their blood, the love they had for the Lord. John lived to be a very old man, and tradition says, that

when he grew too infirm to preach, he would be carried to church and there extending his hands over all the congregation would say, "Little children, love one another." He it was to whom was given the revelation of heaven, which closes the New Testament.

Going down the Jericho road, a great crowd of people followed Jesus, and there were those in the crowd on whom He had compassion, and on whom He wrought miracles of healing. When they drew nigh to Jericho and had reached Bethphage near the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to His disciples,

"Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them: and bring them unto Me.

"And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

"And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon.

"And a very great multitude spread their

garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

This is what we call Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. This is the one time when He came into the city riding as a prince might ride, escorted by enthusiastic crowds of people and by children, calling, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" In that great city filled with strangers from every quarter of the globe, there was stir and agitation, and people called out, "Who is this?" and others said, "This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee!"

We shall find that the crowd was not different in its caprice, from every other crowd, for only a little later the same voices that called "Hosanna," were calling "Crucify Him," around the same Nazarene. ✕

About this time, Jesus entered the temple, and there found that a great many people were making it a market-place, filling its several courts with the clamour of trade, and buying and selling and making money within sound of the stately ritual of Hebrew worship. Jesus was moved with resentment when He

✕ Very doubtful.

saw His Father's House thus profaned. And He cast out those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and with a whip of braided cords drove the people out of the place, saying, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The chief priests and scribes were very angry both that Jesus had cleansed the Temple, where no doubt they had made perquisites of their own, and that the children should have followed Him, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

Turning to Him, they said, "Have you heard what these say?" And Jesus answered, "Yes, have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

The chief priests asked Him by whose authority He did the wonderful things, and who gave Him authority?

He said, "I also will ask you a question: The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?"

"And they reasoned with themselves, If we say from heaven, He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

"But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people: for all hold John as a prophet.

"They answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

It was Christ's custom to teach by parables, and at this time He spoke a number of these in the hearing of the chief priests. One of the most remarkable was that of a certain householder who planted a vineyard, hedged it round about, digged a wine-press in it, built a tower, let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

"And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

"And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

"Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

"But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

"And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

"And when the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

"They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season.

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

When the chief priests heard the parable, they knew that the Saviour spoke of them. That it was the Jewish nation that had been the vineyard planted by the Lord; that the prophets who had been sent to it successively, the prophets and preachers and teachers were the messengers who had been ill treated, and that now in the last days when One had come who came with authority as if from God Himself, they were rejecting Him.

These men were not dull-witted, but they were filled with hate and contempt.

They did not yet dare to take Christ's life because they still feared the people. They were calmly and secretly stirring up public opinion, so that it might be at the right time, ripe to be used against Jesus.

Still another parable He spoke, comparing

the Kingdom of Heaven to a certain king who made a marriage for his son.

"And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

"Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

"And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them.

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city.

"Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

"So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

Now comes the sad part, the part with the heartache.

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment:

"And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless.

"Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

Again the Pharisees made the application to themselves, and again they were angry. They tried after this, to entrap Jesus in a very cunning way, so that they might get the Roman Government to arrest Him for treason. They sent certain people to Him, saying, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?"

Jesus reading their hearts said, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money."

And when they brought to Him the Roman coin in which tribute was paid, He said, "Whose is this image and superscription?"

They answered, "Cæsar's."

Then said He unto them, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's."

A lawyer next came tempting Him, asking,

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

From that day, they durst ask Him no more questions.

## XXV

### SOME PARABLES OF JESUS

A PARABLE is a story of which the kernel is a great truth. Jesus was fond of teaching by the method of a story. The listeners were like ourselves. We never grow weary from our earliest days of stories that are told by the fireside, on the ferry-boat, in the train, or in the pulpit.

When I was a child my father, just before bedtime, would tell me in the dancing firelight, stories from the Bible, stories of Joseph and Samuel and David and Daniel, and of the Child of Bethlehem. Sometimes he chose Old Testament, sometimes New Testament scenes, and often he related the parables of Christ. And before good-night was said, he would sing his favourite hymn that comes back to me over the years.

"Oh, how happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above!
Oh, what tongue can express
The sweet comfort and bliss
Of a soul in its earliest love."

Another hymn clamoured for by the household group was

> "Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near,
> And for my relief He will surely appear."

I cannot begin in this book to tell you again the many parables that Jesus spoke in the ears of the people: you will find them in the pages of the New Testament. We will look only at some that are interwoven for all with memories of childhood's hour of joy in childhood's home of love.

There is the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. All of them were friends of a bride, and had been invited to form part of her wedding procession. A bridesmaid always tries to behave so that she can assist in making the bridal party perfect. In the East manners and customs are different from ours, and the bride in great state and dignity, accompanied by a throng of attendants, leaves her own home and goes forth to meet the bridegroom.

The ten virgins were ready but the bridegroom was delayed, and while they waited for him, they all fell asleep, the wise and the foolish alike. At midnight a cry rang through the street. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him."

Hurriedly the virgins started from their slumber. Hurriedly they trimmed their lamps. The wise virgins had taken with them a supply of oil, and they filled the cup in which the wick burned, and went joyfully onward to meet the bridegroom.

The foolish virgins had forgotten to take oil and their lamps were empty. They reached out their hands to the others, and cried beseechingly, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

"We cannot, we would if we could," exclaimed the wise virgins, "we have only enough for our own lamps and none to spare. If we divided our lamps would go out, and there would be nobody to wait on the bride."

So the wise virgins, holding aloft their burning lamps, passed in with the bride and the bridegroom to the marriage supper, and the door was shut.

Stumbling along in the darkness, the foolish virgins battered on that shut door, imploring that they might be admitted. But the bridegroom looking out, said, "Who may you be, thus storming at my gate? You cannot come in. You are no friends of mine. I never knew you."

Tennyson has some beautiful lines on these foolish virgins. The little novice sings them

to poor foolish Guinevere, who knows too well their inner meaning of loss and pain.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still;
Too late, too late still, ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent;
Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.

"No light; so late; and dark and chill the night!
O let us in that we may find the light!
Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet,
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

The explanation of this parable is, that Christ is the Bridegroom, and His bride is the Church. The wise and the foolish virgins all appear to belong to the Church, but some of them have no real love for the Lord in their hearts. They have been contented to confess Him, with no true loyalty to His Name. They are the foolish virgins. They have hours and hours in which they may retrieve their error, go to the merchant and buy oil for their lamps. They could have this oil for the mere asking, for it would come from the same shop of which Isaiah said, "Come ye who have no money, buy wine and milk without money and

without price." But light-hearted and frivolous, they cared nothing for the bride and nothing for the bridegroom, till the very day of grace was gone.

They had no ground for complaint when they were excluded from the marriage-supper. The guests were at the table, the feast was prepared, but the bridegroom said, "Go away. I never knew *you*."

The lesson of this parable is for us, as for those who heard it first. Shall we belong to the company of the foolish virgins, or with the wise virgins, have our lamps trimmed and burning, with plenty of oil, whenever we shall hear Him coming?

"God calling yet, and shall I never hearken?
But still earth's witcheries my spirit darken,
This passing life, these passing joys, all flying,
And still my soul in dreamy slumbers lying.

"God calling yet! Loud at my door He's knocking,
And I, my heart, my ear, still firmer locking;
He still is ready, willing to receive me,
Is waiting now, but ah! He soon may leave me."

The parable of the talents is so plain and simple that the youngest child can read its meaning. A certain rich man, going from home, left with his servants certain things to be cared for. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one. When after a

long time he returned, he sent for his servants. The one to whom the five talents had been given, had so used them that he brought ten to the original owner, and the owner was very much pleased.

"Well done, good and faithful servant," he said, "Thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The man to whom two talents had been entrusted brought in his report: he had so used them that he had gained four talents, doubling their value.

His lord said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But the servant who had been given the one talent, brought it back. He had not spent it on himself, or run away with it to an unknown land. He had simply folded it in a napkin, buried it in the earth, and never bothered his head about the matter. In excuse he avowed that he knew his lord was strict and austere, and that he was afraid he might lose the talent if he tried in any way to use it.

The lord was very angry. "You wicked and slothful servant," he said in an awe-inspir-

ing voice, "knowing what you did of me, you yet dared to let this talent gather rust, when it could at least been put in the bank, where it would have gained interest. Take from this man the talent," he added, "and give it to him that hath ten talents."

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

In this world of ours this last utterance of the Lord is verified every day. Take the student who works hard over languages and science and mathematics. Whatever he gains by diligence, is presently multiplied. Honours cluster on the head of one who has honours already. Take the girl who plays with skill on organ or piano. She doubles and trebles her talent by use.

Take the great men of the ages, Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Lee, Gladstone; they have been men with five talents, and so have they used them that God made their talents ten. Illustrations of this truth are in every schoolroom, every college, every history, every land.

Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and running over, but —you must first have something to give. The man with one talent atrophied his powers, made them what your right hand would be if

* The writer is speaking of worldly talents, Christ was talking about those virtues which every christian should have. Faith, & works, in the Lords vineyard.

you tied it at your side for six months and never allowed it to hold a pen or a hoe or a sword or a hammer.

Here are some words of Jesus, worth thinking of by you and me, for they show how the present of our toiling and striving is to be clasped and finished by the awards of a surely coming future day.

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

"Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

"Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked and ye clothed Me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

"Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?

"Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

## XXVI

### THE LAST SUPPER

MANY a time had Jesus and His chosen disciples taken a meal together. The twelve who had the great privilege of being in His company and sharing His daily life, were as a little family of which He was the head. They had probably kept the Passover before this as a group of friends might, but on this third year of Christ's ministry, they felt as we do when some great sorrow is hanging over our home circle. For there was a feeling of change in the air. The mutterings of the crowd were growing fierce, like the growl of an angry beast, or the rumble of distant thunder. That roar of the mob, which none who have heard it ever forget, was soon to blot out the remembered music of the children's sweet hosannas.

Jesus was very calm in these days, His countenance more heavenly in its peace than ever before. When the disciples asked the Master where they should go to eat the Passover He directed them to enter the city, and told them they would meet a friend of His, who would show them a large upper room where they might be undisturbed. Jesus knew that

He had friends who were ready to do Him a service.

As the twelve sat around the table, reclining on a couch as was the Eastern fashion, there was one, dearer than the rest and more intimate, who leaned on Jesus' breast. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was to Him the greatest comfort along the sorrowful way, and the greatest joy in the hours of increasing darkness.

The last supper would not have been so very sad if all had been loyal. Earth has no tolerance for a traitor, and in that band of twelve, there was one who had been persuaded by the wicked priests and scribes to betray Jesus, and put Him into their hands, won to this infamy by a promise of money. Judas had the bag we are told, and was the treasurer of the little band. His greed for gain had obscured from his view the vision of the Master's face, and the friendship of years was as nothing to his sordid and miserly soul.

The meal was very simple, only the bread and wine of the country, and as it progressed Jesus told the disciples that one of them would almost immediately betray Him, and surrender Him to His foes. Imagine how Judas must have felt. Dumb amazement and consternation at first fell on the group, but they rallied. "Lord, is it I?" mournfully asked one and

another, and "Lord, who is it?" asked the one whose head was pillowed on Jesus' bosom.

He whose conscience convicted him of a guilty purpose, crept out into the darkness. He could not stay where those eyes of Jesus' were piercing into his very soul.

Jesus had said over and over, so that the words sound like the tolling of a great bell, "Mine hour is not yet come!"

Now He knew that His hour had come, the hour for which He had entered this world.

To me it is one of the most terrible and tragic features of the last supper that the traitor ate of it before he went to finish his treachery. He was just as bad then, as he was later when he took the thirty pieces of silver into his dishonoured hand. An evil purpose in the heart is as shameful and as vile as an evil action committed.

Jesus sat down with the twelve.

"And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

"And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.

"And He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

Wherever in this world, in foreign lands or at home, a little company of Christian people sit down at the holy communion, which is one of the great sacraments of the church, they are eating and drinking in remembrance of Jesus Christ.

"This do," He said, "till time shall end
In memory of your dying Friend."

"Many centuries have fled
Since our Saviour broke the bread.
And His sacred feast ordained
Ever by His Church retained,
Those His body who discern
Thus shall meet till His return."

Even little children who love Jesus have a place at His table, and none should be shut out from it who sincerely repent of sin, and honestly intend to follow Jesus in the world.

There was one at the last supper who betrayed his Lord. Another, who loved Him, was to grieve the Master by a base and cowardly denial of Him. One would not have expected

this from Peter, the bold and impulsive and ardent man, but Peter was over-confident in himself, and not sufficiently confident in Christ. "Though I should die with Thee," boastfully and sincerely exclaimed Peter, "I will not deny Thee. Though all should deny Thee, yet will not I."

Alas! the Master knew Peter better than Peter knew his own heart.

"I will lay down my life for Thy sake," said Peter.

"Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" Jesus surveyed him with a deep compassion. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice."

The most loving words our Master ever spoke, were spoken in this hour.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

"Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.

"Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.

"Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

"If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

A little later, still talking to the listeners

with divinest gentleness, and trying to prepare them for the ordeal that was to try their faith, Jesus said, "I am indeed going away but the Comforter will come when I am gone."

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

In the moonlight rising over the hills, they then went forth, and Jesus led them towards the slopes of Olivet. As they walked, He saw the vines bending under their weight of purple grapes, and He told them to look at the vines.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman," He said teaching them to the very end in familiar parables.

"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing.

"If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: the men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples.

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love.

"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

"This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

"Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and

bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another."

One's heart beats fast and one's eyes grow dim with tears, when one reads these sentences spoken to the poor, frightened, wonder-stricken disciples, on the edge of a great calamity, by Him who was to endure the supreme grief and pain, but whose only thought was to prepare and strengthen those He was leaving. He told them that in the world they would meet hatred and persecution and trouble, but they need not be afraid.

"Be of good cheer," He said, "I have overcome the world."

Then Jesus made a prayer to His Father in Heaven, a prayer that none could have made, except the Man Christ Jesus, who was also the Son of God.

When the prayer was ended, Jesus led them over the brook Cedron to a place where there was a garden.

## XXVII

### GETHSEMANE

THE garden beyond the brook was a favourite resort, to which Jesus had before this hour gone when He wished to be alone.

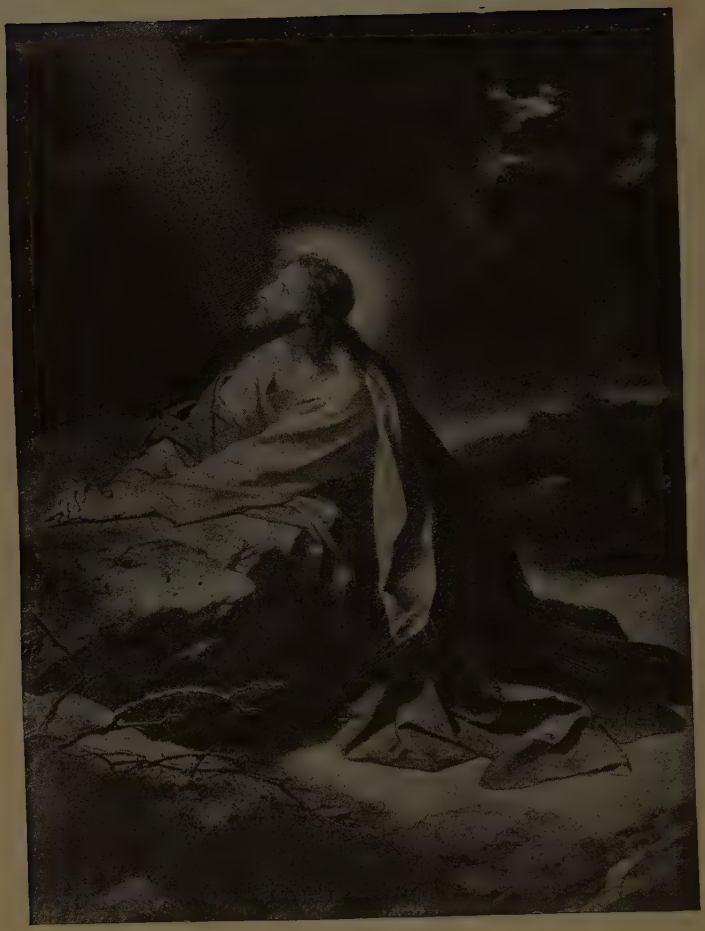
All His disciples knew the spot. Judas knew it too, and knew by some intuition that here he would be likely to find Him.

Jesus left the larger part of the disciples near the garden's entrance, but went into its deeper shades with the three who had been with Him when He raised the little maiden from the dead, when He stood on Hermon's top and was transfigured, and who had often been His companions on long nights, when the fishers' boats spread their sails and floated over the sea of Galilee.

He asked them to watch while He withdrew a little space, about a stone's cast, and knelt in prayer.

Here, in the garden, in His final struggle against the devil whom Jesus had routed in the wilderness when His ministry began, in His final wrestle against the powers of wickedness, Jesus tasted the full bitterness of the cup He was to drink to the dregs.

Go on from here and point
out the imperfections



JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

His soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death. He had said to His three friends, "Sit here, while I go yonder to pray."

Wearied with the long day, they fell asleep.

No man witnessed the agony in Gethsemane. But an angel came flying from heaven to strengthen the Lord in that mortal anguish when the drops of sweat that oozed from His brow were great drops of blood falling to the ground.

"Father, if it be Thy will," He pleaded, "let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done."

Since that scene in the garden, the word we use when we think of any one in mortal pain is Gethsemane. When any one reaches a crisis that human language cannot paint, the word Gethsemane is a picture that shows it in its lurid colours, so that all understand.

"Could ye not watch with Me one hour," said the Lord to the disciples. Tender reproach was in the question, and they were broken-hearted that they had slept.

"Never mind," He said. "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. Yet watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

I said that Judas knew the garden under the olives as well as the other disciples did. As Jesus was leaving the place, there was sud-

denly a great uproar. The moon had set. The midnight darkness was gathering thickly.

The crowd of ruffianly men from the chief priests, led by Judas had with them lanterns and torches and weapons. They rushed forward in boisterous haste as if to apprehend a rioter, or an outlaw.

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

"They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.

"And as soon as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

"Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

"Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way. That the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me, I have lost none.

"Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

"Then Jesus said unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?

"Then the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound

Him, and led Him away to Annas first; for He was the father-in-law to Caiaphas which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

This is the description of John. Matthew tells us that Judas approaching Jesus, cried, "Hail, Master," and kissed Him, thus putting with his deceitful lips, the crowning touch upon his infamy. Matthew tells us that Jesus said, answering the traitor's kiss, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" And when Peter struck the servant of the high priest with his sword, Jesus rebuked his zeal, saying, "Put up thy sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently send Me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Invisible hosts of angels, powerless to help because they had not been commanded, must have witnessed this singular scene, the angry band of temple attendants, the slinking Judas, the dismayed disciples, and in the midst, the figure of Him, who for three and thirty years had made Judea a holy land, and for three years had gone about doing good.

"I was daily with you in the temple," He said, "and you laid no hands on Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

## XXVIII

### IN THE HOUSE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

THE hottest flame of hatred in human experience is lighted by religious bigotry. As we read history we find in every age the most terrible crimes, and the most malignant passions excited and raging, where men make a pretense of doing wrong because they think it right. But the high priest of the Hebrews in the day of the Lord's betrayal had not this excuse. He knew and the men around Him knew that they were pursuing an innocent victim, with a causeless malice that would not be satisfied until the victim was slain.

In the chill hour between midnight and dawn, Jesus, unresisting, was dragged into the house of the high priest. The crowd which had seized Him was violent and bloodthirsty, and it terrorized the disciples. We blush when we read that they all forsook Him and fled. Maybe we would have done the same. But they did not quite *all* forsake Him. John, the beloved disciple, was acquainted with the high priest, and he went in with his Master, and stood as near Him as he could in the great hall where His first trial was to begin. And

John went to the door, and knowing the servant who acted as porter, persuaded him to let Peter in also. If John and Peter for a single instant joined the rout of the fleeing disciples, they overcame their panic and soon hurried back.

At one end of the hall, seated in a great chair, you may observe the high priest in his robes of office, an obsequious retinue surrounding him. In front of him stands the Nazarene clad in the blue homespun garments of a Galilean peasant. Only angry and contemptuous faces are around Him now, except that a little way off watching with eager love, stands John, silent, grave, and fearless. Love had made him a hero in that hour.

Around the fire at the other end of the hall is a motley group. Ruffians who had dragged Jesus from the garden through the deserted streets, rub their hands with complacency. Servants of the high priest are there, and there too are clusters of haughty Pharisees and smooth-tongued scribes and priests and Levites are there too. Jesus is not unlike the man who, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, and being left wounded and beaten, lay on the ground as if dead. Priest and Levite passed that man by, indifferent. Jesus is not yet wounded and beaten. He stands, a dignified and impres-

sive Man, superb in courage, of magnificent strength, a lion attacked by curs. Priest and Levite stare at Him with hostility. There is no Good Samaritan to come to the rescue. Not till the storm spends itself, and Jesus is slain, will the priests and the Pharisees breathe freely.

John sees it all.

Peter from the corner where he warms himself at the fire, sees it too. A wild clamour is raging around the Master.

There is a seething undercurrent of bitter and menacing talk by the fire, where the menials congregate. Words, hard as hailstones are hurled at Jesus by these low people. Peter hears them, and shrinks. He hopes that nobody will notice him. And he hears as in a dreadful dream, the tumult at the opposite end of the room.

A maid servant, suddenly turning, takes note of the cringing Galilean, and the self-consciousness of his attitude seizes her attention.

"Why, why," she exclaims, "what are you doing *here?* You were with Jesus. You are one of His followers."

"No," said Peter, "you are mistaken. I never knew Him."

But he loitered away from the fire, and into the porch. He did not dare to stay in that

neighbourhood. Somebody else might accuse him. Fear had conquered Peter, fear, abject, unreasoning, and despotic. It is dreadful to be frightened through and through.

Another maid in the porch, said as the first had done, "Here is a man who belongs to the prisoner. This fellow was with Jesus of Galilee. I have seen him."

Peter denied with an oath that he had ever known Jesus. "I do not know the Man," he said.

Poor, craven coward! To fail so ignobly when he might have endured so manfully!

He edged his way a little farther from Jesus, a little farther from those pitiless accusing maids.

Another voice cried with a taunting laugh, "Surely thou also art one of them. It is useless to deny it. Thy speech betrays thee."

In the rough Northern burr of the Galilean fisherman, Peter as perhaps he had often done before Jesus called him, began to curse and swear, vehemently denying Christ.

Then, clear as a clarion, the dawn reddening in the East, the cock crew. A new day had begun.

Peter had denied his Lord three times.

From the crowd before the high priest, the Lord turned and looked on Peter. That look, so pitying, so reproachful, went to Peter's

heart. He tore himself away, rushed to some lonesome corner and wept bitterly.

Meanwhile, false witnesses, of whom there were plenty in the pay of the priests, fairly tumbled over each other, in their desire to incriminate Jesus. But their evidence was so contradictory and flimsy that the high priest, mindful of the people who, gone mad for the moment, yet loved Jesus, and mindful of the Romans who governed the country, did not dare to accept such testimony. They wanted witnesses to say of Jesus things on which He might be condemned to death.

Finally, one arose and said, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

"And the high priest arose, and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

"And Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

"Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death."

From this moment the fury of demons pos-

sessed the minions of the high priest. The high priest in horror rent his clothes, calling it blasphemy that the prisoner before him, should tell him that He would yet sit on the right hand of God. In real or feigned horror, the high priest asked what fate Jesus deserved and received the answer he wanted.

"He deserves to die. He is guilty. Put Him to death."

They clamoured and shrieked and surged in their passion close to Jesus. They left no insult out of their treatment. Jesus stood there, a rock in the midst of the storm, while these wicked men spat in His face, struck Him, buffeted Him, were ready to pull Him limb from limb. It was as if all the devils Jesus had ever cast out of suffering men, had entered into this crew of cowards, and were wreaking their spite on Jesus. All this indeed had been going on, while Peter, terrified, had denied his Lord, and it was at its height, when the Lord turned, and looked at Peter.

You cannot help feeling how splendid and royal is the bearing of Jesus, how manly and brave, how valiant He is, while the crowd of ingrates vent their futile hatred on Him. Among them must have been some whom in other days, He had helped, perhaps cured of disease. But they forgot this in the insane desire to kill the Prince of Life.

## XXIX

### BEFORE PILATE'S JUDGMENT SEAT

THE very worst person in the world has, somewhere in his nature, a side that can be touched by goodness, and so it is not surprising that Judas, seeing that the Master did not save Himself from His enemies, repented of his share in the transaction. Judas had yielded to his besetting sin, a desire for money, but with the blood-stained money in his hand, there came to him a realization of the blackness of his deed. He went to the chief priests, threw down the money, and said, "I have sinned. I have betrayed the innocent. Take back the price of my shame."

Hard and jeering faces confronted him. The miserable man found no pity in them. "What is that to us?" They turned from him in scorn, and Judas went away and hanged himself. Jesus had truly said of the man who should betray Him, "It had been well for that man had he never been born." Yet, I believe if in that hour, Judas had gone to Jesus and confessed his sin to Him, the Master would have received and forgiven him in heavenly love.

Jew and Gentile were to unite in sacrificing

the Lamb of God. The Jew looked down upon all beyond the pale of Abraham's line, and regarded the Romans and the Greeks and the rest of the world-peoples as outside barbarians. Yet the Roman eagles flew over Palestine, and a Roman governor ruled the land. The Jewish priesthood had great power, but when it was a question of condemning a man to death, they had to stand aside. Only Rome could do this.

From the hall of the high priest Jesus was led, a captive strongly bound and guarded by an armed posse, that He might be delivered into the hands of Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler. By this time, although it was early, the whole city was moved, and everywhere one theme was the topic of conversation. The wife of Pilate heard what was going on and she sent her husband a message, urging him to have nothing to do with the murder of this just person. No woman, Jew or Gentile, ever raised a hand or spoke a word against Jesus of Nazareth. Women did not cry "Crucify Him," though they did cry "Hosanna in the Highest!"

Pilate surveyed the prisoner brought before his judgment seat, with frank curiosity. He had the vaguest notion why the Jews hated this Man, and his first inquiry showed him wide of the mark.

"Art Thou the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Thou sayest."

Son of David and Son of God, Jesus was indeed King of the Jews. The fact was the occasion of their fiercest rage for they did not want such a King as He to reign over them.

The chief priests poured out their accusations before Pilate. Jesus made no reply, though Pilate gave Him the opportunity to defend Himself. But as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth. Thus was another prophecy fulfilled.

It was customary at this Passover season to release some noted prisoner, and grant him a pardon. Judge of the hatred of the Jews when Pilate having given them their choice, they clamoured for the release of a notorious criminal named Barabbas, and declared that they wished the condemnation of Jesus.

"What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" asked the Roman. A mighty shout went up, "Let Him be crucified!"

"Why," said the governor, "what evil hath He done?"

Their vehemence drowned his protest. "Let Him be crucified!"

Certain men in history are forever to be pitied because they threw away a chance to achieve an honoured place in the world's roll

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE'S JUDGMENT SEAT

of heroes. Pilate is one of these. He was afraid of this mob of Jews, afraid to peril his popularity, afraid to resist this outbreak, though he had an army at his back. He had no heart in the killing of Jesus. To the end of time, Pilate's name will be infamous because Pilate was weak when he should have been strong.

"They gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

"And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet; They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots."

Little did the Jews comprehend the curse they invoked in that hour. From the days when Titus levelled the walls of Jerusalem until our own day, the Hebrew has been a target for persecution, exiled, separated, driven out from one land, dispersed in another, tormented and oppressed. Never yet has the curse been removed. Christendom has not been Christlike in its treatment of the Jew. May a day dawn soon when the great love of Jesus shall gather in these people of whose race He was born, and when their eyes may be opened that they may know Him as their Messiah.

Pilate sent messengers to the prison of Barabbas, and set him free.

Before the last act in this drama, that nothing might be omitted, which should drop an added bitter in the Master's cup, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. This wicked prince was glad when he saw Him, for he secretly hoped that Jesus would work a miracle in his presence. He questioned Him in the hearing of his court, but Jesus did not answer. So Herod and his men at arms made sport of Jesus, put on Him in mockery a scarlet robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Barabbas was released. Jesus was cruelly scourged, by order of the governor, and was then given over to the soldiers to be crucified.

Bound and bleeding, a faded scarlet robe thrown over His shoulders, the Roman soldiery mocked Jesus still further. On His head they put a crown of sharp thorns. Smiting Him on the head with a reed, they cried in derision,

"Hail King of the Jews!"

Tired at last of this hideous mockery, they took off the robe of royal scarlet and put on the Sufferer, His peasant raiment. Then they led Him to the place where malefactors of the lowest class were executed, led Him away to be crucified.

"Let Him be crucified!" said Pilate. Long after, John in Patmos saw in vision the Lion

of the Tribe of Judah, and lo! He was a Lamb that had been slain. And ten thousand times ten thousand sang, "Worthy the Lamb to receive power and wisdom and riches and strength and honour and glory and blessing."

Jesus was condemned to die on the cross. The death was shameful exceedingly. The gallows in our day is not more dreaded for its stigma than was the cross. No death was so prolonged in its anguish, so intense in its torture. But Jesus went willingly to the cross that He might atone for the sins of the whole world. It was sin that deserved to be crucified, and the Sinless therefore went to the cross. And because of this sacrifice,

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

## XXX

### JESUS ON THE CROSS

On Mount Calvary there were three crosses on that day when our Lord was crucified. That no ignominy might be left out, Jesus of Nazareth was put to death between two thieves.

The way to Calvary was steep, and Jesus trod it bearing His cross. But soon His escort, unwilling to go so slowly as they had to, with the exhausted and stricken Sufferer, laid the cross on a man named Simon, who was of Cyrene, a bystander in the throng, and he carried it after Jesus.

The women who beheld this pitiful sight wept and wailed. To them, Jesus turned, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children."

Nailed to the cruel cross, the great spikes rending His hands and His feet, our Saviour hung between heaven and earth. Down at the foot of the cross were the vengeful chief priests, and a rabble of Jews, hostile to the last. The Roman soldiers were in another group tossing dice that they might divide among them the clothing of the victim. Long

ago it had been foretold that they should do this. "They parted My garments among them, and for My vesture did they cast lots."

A mournful company, composed of the disciples and a few women who had loved Jesus, stood and watched Him die. Among the women was Mary His mother. She who had borne Him, who had cradled Him in her arms, who had lulled Him on her breast, stood broken-hearted there. From the cross, He spoke to the disciple He loved best, "Son, behold thy mother," and to His mother, He said, "Woman, behold thy son." So from that hour John cared for Mary in his home, and was to her a son in her old age.

You must not fancy that it was strange for Jesus to address His mother, as "woman." This was the ordinary salutation of the period and conveyed only affection. That on the cross He had a thought for her showed how dearly He loved her who in the world was nearest Him.

"Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do," came from those pale lips as Jesus hung upon the cross. He had only pardon for His enemies, though they had only hate for Him.

Pilate had written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin this legend, and had placed it above the cross.

"This is Jesus the King of the Jews."

The priests did not like to have this inscription there, but Pilate refused to alter it. When in mockery he put it there, he was irritated that he had, as he knew he had, condemned an innocent man. In the years that followed Pilate may have been haunted by some words Jesus had said, when he had asked, "Knowest Thou not that I have power to condemn Thee and power to release Thee?" and Jesus had answered, "Thou couldst have no power against Me at all if it were not given thee from above."

The taunting crowd at the foot of the cross exclaimed, "Let Christ the King of Israel now come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him. He saved others. Himself He cannot save."

Though they did not mean it, they spoke the truth. If the world were to be saved, Jesus could not save Himself in that hour. To the uttermost the price of redemption had to be paid.

They brought Him a sponge filled with vinegar to moisten His lips and relieve His thirst, but He did not taste it.

Thick darkness, the gloom of midnight at noon, settled over Calvary, over Jerusalem, over Judea, and over lands far off, from twelve o'clock until three. Out of this darkness broke

a piercing cry from the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Just once, the Son in that terrible hour of conflict, knew what it means for a soul to lose sight of the Father's face. Just once!

One of the malefactors dying on a cross beside Jesus, joined in the taunts of the crowd. The other repenting of his wickedness, and believing said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."

And Jesus, performing His final work of kindness to a mortal man, while here He tarried on the earth, said to the penitent thief,

"Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Deeper grew the darkness. Men could not see one another so great was the gloom.

Suddenly an earthquake shook the city. The veil of the Temple, the veil that divided the Holy of Holies, where evermore brooded the glory of the Lord above the ark of the Covenant, was torn from top to bottom, as if by invisible hands. The veil was needed no longer for Jesus had now made every place a Holy of Holies, where the little child or the penitent sinner should kneel to Him.

"Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit!" came in royal tones from the victim on the cross. Then, with a loud resonant

voice, He called "It is finished!" and yielded up His soul.

The Roman centurion in command was moved with amazement. He glorified God we are told. In silence and sorrow the crowds scattered and went home. But the Romans had still something to do. They pierced the side of Jesus with a spear.

So broken, so marred, so kingly still, the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor went boldly to Pilate and demanded the body of Jesus, which he wrapped in a cloth of fair white linen, and laid away in his new tomb, a sepulchre in a garden. They rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and a guard of Roman soldiers was appointed to watch before it, until the third day. For He had said, that on the third day He would rise again.

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

"We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

"He died that we might be forgiven;
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

"O dearly, dearly has He loved,
And we must love Him too,
And trust in His redeeming blood,
And try His work to do."

## XXXI

### THE LORD IS RISEN

Two great festal days mark the Christian year, Christmas and Easter. The first is in honour of our Lord's coming into the world. Wherever there is a home, wherever there are children, in every quarter of the globe, there is joy that we are in the kingdom of the Child who came to Bethlehem. The little Son of Mary wins the hardest hearts. Old grudges disappear, feuds are forgotten, love flows from heart to heart at Christmas-tide.

> When Christmas comes
> In field and street, in mart and farm
> The world takes on a lovelier charm.
> Sweet-scented boughs of pine and fir,
> Are brought like frankincense and myrrh,
> To make our holy places meet
> For hands that clasp and tones that greet,
> While hearts, more worth than gold or gem
> Go forth to find their Bethlehem
> When Christmas comes.

Yet Christmas is less a day of victory than Easter, for the sweet story that begins then, is incomplete until it is crowned by the announcement, "The Lord is risen." If Jesus Christ,

having breathed His last on the cross, had never come back to the world, in life, as He promised, then the Star of Bethlehem might as well have never flamed, the angels as well never have sung "Glory in the Highest" in the midnight sky, and the wise men from the East, need not have taken their journey to find the Babe in the manger. Easter sounds the grandest strain in the Hallelujah Chorus that angels and men sing together over the world's redemption. We might have wept over our Crucified King, if He had never risen from the dead, but we sound His praises now, because He lives and reigns forever and ever.

Friends in the bright spring morning, when you carry your lilies to church that they may be fragrant emblems of the resurrection,

> Sing a song of Easter,
> A song that means a prayer
> Of want and love to One above
> Who keeps the world in care.
> A song for all on this green earth,
> For loved ones passed away,
> Sing clear and strong the joyful song,
> The song of Easter Day.

Few households have never known the pang that rends the heart when dear ones die. If we gave up our loved ones with the feeling that we should never see them again, our grief could not pass away. We would have

no comfort. But the little sister, the little brother, the parent, the friend to whom you said good-bye, whom you saw laid in the grave, is not dead.

The dear ones who leave our home circle, go home to be with Jesus, and are more alive there with Him, than they were when here with us.

"Ten thousand times ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment white
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light.
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin,
Fling open wide the golden gates
And let the victors in."

They never would have reached Heaven victorious, if Jesus had not first trodden the path of death, and conquered death with life.

When I was a child, I first knew what death meant, when a little brother only eight years old, fell asleep one summer day, to awake in heaven. Just before the angel who carries little children home, came over the threshold and bore him away, one who was sitting beside the dear little fellow, saw his lips move in prayer. She stooped closer, and she heard him say, "Dear Jesus go with me through the dark, and keep Satan from

troubling me." And Jesus heard that prayer. Our living Jesus always hears our prayers.

We left our dear Lord lying at rest in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Nicodemus, who long before had sought Jesus in the quiet hush of night, that he might be taught the way of life, brought a hundred pounds' weight of spices and myrrh to embalm the body of his dear Friend and Master. The women who loved Him brought their sweet spices too. They meant to embalm the precious body, so that decay should not touch it. This would be the very last thing they could do to show their love.

But they had to wait until the Jewish Sabbath was past.

Our Sabbath, as you know, is kept on the first day of the week, in memory of the Lord's resurrection. Every Sabbath is a sort of Easter Day, when we remind ourselves that He that was dead, left the tomb, and ascended up to His Father in heaven, appearing at intervals to many disciples for a period of forty days.

The disciples who came to the sepulchre, very early in the morning on the first day of the week, hurrying thither as fast as they could, and wondering who would roll away the stone for them, found it rolled away.

An angel at the very break of dawn had

come straight from heaven to do this, and to minister to the Lord. The Roman guard had fallen down in terror, as with the sound of an earthquake, the tomb was rent apart. The angel of the Lord not only rolled away the stone but sat upon it. I have always felt glad that the women who loved Jesus were the very first to hear the angel say, "Fear not, I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here. He is risen as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

The angels appeared in a different manner to the different ones who came running to the tomb. Peter and John were not far behind the women who arrived first, and at the amazing news that the Lord was not there, but had risen, John ran so fast that he reached the tomb before Peter. A very sweet touch of love was conveyed in the angel's earliest words to the astonished women, "Tell His disciples, and Peter, that He is not here, that He goeth before you into Galilee."

As though the Lord would assure Peter that He had forgiven him that base and cowardly denial of Him in the hall of the high priest!

Mary Magdalene had the most beautiful experience of all. She was distressed, heartbroken: she could not understand, though the linen clothes lay there folded up and the tomb was vacant, that her dear Lord was indeed

JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, MARY

alive again. Over and over she murmured in her despair,

"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

"Mary!"

A voice she knew called her by name. A man whom she supposed to be the gardener stood there, under the olives, in the morning sunlight.

"Mary!"

Oh, the tenderness in that voice! "I have called thee by thy name. Thou art Mine," said the prophet of old. Jesus called her by her name.

"Master!" she cried in a transport of delight, and would have kissed His feet, but He restrained her.

"Touch Me not," He said, "I am not yet ascended to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

He would not allow Mary to touch Him, in His new body which had risen from the dead, but He did permit Thomas to do so; Thomas was the disciple who led the way when Jesus took His last journey to Jerusalem saying, "Let us also go, and die with Him."

When the disciples told Thomas that Jesus had risen he refused to believe the story. It was to him an idle tale.

"The other disciples said to him, We have

seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Eight days passed away. Eight joyful days to the disciples who knew that the Master had kept His word and risen. Eight triumphant days to those who recalled how He had said of His life, "No man taketh it from Me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." Eight days of mourning and sadness to the loving Thomas, who did not believe what Jesus had said. Let us read this incident as John relates it.

"And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

"Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.

"And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

"And Jesus saith unto Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

## XXXII

### A WAYSIDE WALK

ONE of the most interesting appearances of our Saviour after His Resurrection is that of which we are told by Luke, in the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel. Jerusalem had drawn together numbers of people to keep the Passover. Naturally among them were some faithful disciples of Christ whose hearts had been almost broken as they stood around the cross. Among those who were returning very sorrowfully to their own homes, were two who lived in a place called Emmaus, a little village between seven and eight miles distant from the Capital. One of these men was named Cleopas, and the other is not named in the story. They walked together, talking of all the things which had lately happened, their hearts so heavy that their voices sometimes shook with sobs. While they were thus communing and reasoning together, a third person drew near and joined himself to their company. It was then after midday, and the heat of the sun was somewhat tempered, but the road seems to have been lonely and there was no throng upon its silent stretches.

There was nothing about the stranger that drew their special attention when first He accosted them. Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. To us the extraordinary thing is that people who had ever known Jesus, and had walked and talked with Him while He was their Friend and Guide, should not have recognized Him the instant He drew near. Still some of us have the same experience now. We are so preoccupied with our own thoughts, our business, and the many things this world brings to bear upon us, that we let our best Friend pass us by unrecognized. Do not let us blame the disciples too much.

Jesus Himself drew near, but the two disciples had not the faintest notion that it was He, even when He said, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

One of them, the one called Cleopas, turned in great astonishment and said, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" This was just the inquiry that might have been expected, because the whole city had been moved, and no one could have been in Jerusalem without being aware that a great and terrible event had taken place.

But Jesus answered, "What things?"

"And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which would have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since those things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre: And when they found not the body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said, but they saw Him not."

Jesus listened to these words of theirs with great tenderness and compassion, as we may believe, yet surely wondering that it was so hard for His disciples to accept what He had so often told them. He spoke gravely and reproachfully, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Jesus had preached many wonderful sermons during the years of His ministry before He

gave Himself up to die upon the cross, but I think no sermon of His could ever have been so remarkable in its power, or so sublime, as this which was addressed to two disciples as they walked on the road from Jerusalem to their village home. Surely no wayfarers ever had such company as had these two men with whom the risen Son of God walked as a fellow pilgrim. He began with Moses, and explained to them from the different prophets, the things that had been foretold about Him.

By and by they drew near Emmaus. The first scattered houses were visible, people were standing by the doors, women were going to the well to draw water, little household fires were sending up their curling smoke. They were almost at home, and their Friend who had joined them made as though He would have gone further, but the two disciples could not let Him go. They urged Him with loving constraint, saying, "Abide with us: for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." Their very souls clung to this Man, who was still to them a stranger.

How could they be separated from this dear companionship? They wanted Him still with them, and longed to have Him tarry in their house for at least one happy night. So He went in and tarried with them. We may imagine what a welcome He received under their

roof, and how the women of the family hastened to prepare the evening meal, and when at last it was ready, how the three men sat down together, while perhaps in the background women and children looked on, and Jesus sat at meat with His disciples. He had often done this before. He took bread, and blessed it, and gave to them, and in that familiar act, He was revealed. Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. And then He vanished out of their sight.

As Mary had been, and as Thomas, they were now convinced. They said one to another, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

Forgetting that they were tired, and that they had had a long journey, they made haste, girded up their loins the same night, and walking with quick step and throbbing pulse, they hurried back to Jerusalem, and there in an upper room they found the eleven apostles and a few other disciples who loved to be in their company, and bursting in upon them, they said,

"The Lord is risen indeed."

While they were speaking, Jesus Himself suddenly stood in the midst of the group, and said, "Peace be unto you." Some of those to whom He now appeared were frightened, sup-

posing that they had seen a spirit. Not those with whom He had just conversed, remember, but the others to whom it was yet a new thing, who could not comprehend the great mystery. So much passed the bounds of human conception, that they did not know how to believe in the Lord's Resurrection.

He said unto them, "Why are ye troubled, and why do these thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself: handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." When He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He gave them a more and more convincing proof that He was indeed the same Jesus they had known before. He said again, "Have ye here any meat?" And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb, and He took it and did eat before them.

Again to these assembled disciples, Jesus opened up the Word of Life, telling them that all that had happened was according as it was written, that Christ had to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And then with a wonderful unfolding of the truth He said, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And they listened, but

did not yet fully understand. They never did wholly understand, until Jesus was out of their sight.

He had to go away and stay away, before these friends of His could really keep with assurance such an Easter day, as you and I keep, when we rejoice that we have a risen Lord.

For to us, the Holy Ghost has come, as He came to them.

## XXXIII

### LOVEST THOU ME?

It was not only when the evening shadows had gathered that Jesus revealed Himself to the bereaved and loved disciples. At least once He came to them in the very earliest flush of the dawn.

When death enters our earthly homes, it makes a hush and an interruption for a little while, but before very long we always find that we must take up the burden of life, and go on again. So it was with these men of Galilee.

Jesus had called some of His most earnest disciples from the fishing-boats on the lake, and during all the time of His ministry they pursued their calling when it was needful. After He was gone from them they resumed their old occupation, and it happened thus that there were together the old comrades, Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John the sons of Zebedee, and one or two others. Simon who always was the leader, said to his friends, "It is not worth while for us to loiter about doing nothing, we may as well make ourselves busy again as we used to. I go a

fishing." The others said, "We will go with thee."

They found a little boat, launched it into the deep, and toiled through the night, but caught no fish. Very early in the morning, discouraged and weary, and dragging home their empty nets, they came towards the shore. There a familiar figure stood, and yet their eyes were holden and they did not at once know that it was the Master. Out over the water rang His cheery voice, "Children, have ye any meat?"

They answered sorrowfully, "No." Defeat is always sorrowful. Who can be glad over empty nets?

In tones of quiet command, Jesus said to them then, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."

Old fishermen though they were, they did not hesitate an instant to obey this mandate, but at once yielded to the stranger's wish; they cast the net, and suddenly it was filled with a multitude of fishes, so that it must tax their strength to draw in the shining spoil.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, seeing this miraculous draught of fishes, exclaimed to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter could not wait for the little ship to get to land. Hurriedly he girt around him his fisherman's coat, for it had encumbered him, and he had thrown it

off, and casting himself into the sea, he rushed through the waves to throw himself at the feet of Jesus. The other disciples followed in their little boat, dragging the net with the fish.

And now we come to the most beautiful and touching scene of all. As they stepped on the shore, in the cold gray morning, there was a fire of coals burning brightly, and a meal had been prepared, fish was broiling on the coals, and there was provision of bread. Who had prepared this meal if not our Lord Himself, in tender care for the tired children whom He loved?

In the olden days angels often ministered to the needs of Christ's people, and, under Christ's direction, an angel may have prepared this breakfast by the Sea of Galilee. Yet it is sweet to think that even as He fed the five thousand, He now deigned to feed the few weary men who had toiled all night. He said to them, "Bring of the fish ye have now caught." They drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three.

"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of His disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord."

Jesus then gave them bread and fish, and fed their hunger. The hands that brake this bread were hands in which were the print of

the nails; the voice that blessed this food had said, "It is finished," on the cross.

After this, and not until the meal was over, the Lord turned to Peter.

This was now the third time that Simon Peter and James and John had seen Jesus, and talked with Him after He had risen from the dead. Suddenly Jesus turned and said to Peter, singling him by name, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea Lord: Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My lambs.

"He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea Lord: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep.

"Jesus saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep."

A little while ago Peter had denied his Lord three times in quick succession, and therefore three times as if in reminder, Jesus asked him the intimate question, "Lovest thou Me?" and three times He gave to this disciple to whom so much had been forgiven, the commission to feed the flock that He loved.

Throughout the life of Peter, to old age, he indeed fed Christ's sheep, and took care of Christ's lambs, until the day when he, too, was crucified, witnessing with his blood his loyalty to the Lord.

If you follow the life of Peter as it is shown in the Acts of the Apostles, and then if you read the beautiful letters that he wrote to the churches, you will see how strong and fine and fearless was the clinging of Peter to his Master. He grew more spiritual as years passed. It was Peter who said, "Though ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." He advised the disciples to whom he preached to cast all their care upon God, who would care for them, telling them to be sober and vigilant, because of their adversary the devil, who as a roaring lion, walked about, seeking whom he might devour. Peter's epistles are practical hand-books of religion for the twentieth century.

The story of Peter and of Christ's forgiving love is a great encouragement to us, who are so often tempted, and who may in our own way deny our Lord in as cowardly a fashion as he did with far less excuse. If ever we do this, the way back is the way of penitence and obedience, to our dear Saviour. Out of shame and grief into His blessed love.

Soon after this, our Lord left the world and

went back to His Father in heaven. When He was ready to go, He led His disciples out as far as Bethany, and there He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried beyond their sight.

To them as to us has been made good the promise He divinely spoke,

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

## XXXIV

### OUR LORD'S LAST WORDS

BEFORE our Lord finally left the earth and ascended to heaven, He said some last words to those He loved. They treasured up these words and passed them on. The words were a command. During the earliest three centuries of the Christian era, hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands heard and obeyed this command, following Jesus to prison and to death, and preaching what He taught them by example and by precept. For the last words were spoken to the eleven apostles who had witnessed His miracles, heard His sermons, been with Him at the last supper, and beheld Him again and again after His resurrection.

Obeying the command of the Lord the eleven apostles went away into Galilee. There they gathered in a secluded spot, a mountain which Jesus had selected as the place where He would leave them to begin their life without His visible presence.

They were assembled in a group, with a sense of waiting, knowing by this time that Jesus was coming to them soon.

Presently He again appeared, and when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, though there were some in whose hearts a little doubt yet lingered.

Dear ones who read this page, stop here, and look into your hearts. Look there before you blame these apostles. Have you ever doubted the power and grace and love of the Lord Jesus? Is He real to you to-day? Is your faith so strong that you believe every word He says? Is your love so true, that you hasten to do what He tells you?

When you love an earthly friend very dearly you try to be like the friend. You think about the friend, and sometimes you surprise the friend by a gift, or a visit, or a letter, or a bit of self-denial. If you love Jesus, you may do all this for Him.

"If our hearts were but more simple
We should take Him at His word.
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

When Jesus met the apostles He said as He approached them, I am sure with a majesty that was felt, the majesty of a sovereign,

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost,

teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thus saying, He went up to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God.

The apostles began at Jerusalem, and, after they had received the Holy Ghost, for Jesus had before this promised that when He had gone, the Comforter would come, they extended their preaching beyond Judea into other regions. Paul who was called by Jesus Himself from the sky, to cease a career of persecution, and preach the Saviour's gospel to the Gentiles, carried the good news to Europe. All the story of the early church as you read it in the book of the Acts of the Apostles is a story of heroic preaching and suffering for the sake of a risen Redeemer.

The apostles were all missionaries. Every Christian since Christ left the world is a missionary, or else he is not a Christian. Missionary means one sent. Each of us who loves Jesus Christ, is sent to proclaim His truth to men. We may do this in our own homes, in crowded streets of great cities, in lonely villages, in ships on the sea, in islands of the ocean, in lands afar, to people of every race, colour, and condition. When we cannot in person go away as missionaries, we can give

our money and our prayers to spread the gospel.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar;
Who follows in His train?

"Who best can drink His cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears His cross below,
He follows in His train."

You who are in school and college now, may live to see the day when idol worship shall end, and the whole round world be girdled by prayer and praise evening and morning to Jesus Christ. The tapers that twinkle on the Christmas tree, are lighted to-day in Africa, in Asia, in Europe, in America. The Christmas music ripples in the tide of melody on every shore in the globe. The sweet story of old is translated into all known tongues and dialects, and children of every race may hear it at their mother's knee.

The young men and women of far Eastern lands are taking up the cross of Jesus, and bearing it after Him in reverence and love. Student volunteers are eager to go forth and win the whole earth for the Master.

What share is to be yours in this magnificent campaign? Are you giving Jesus Christ your

best, in the happy day of youth and strength? Then indeed your life will be full and blessed, and you will know what it means to have Jesus always with you.

There are some who have not yet discovered what it is to have Jesus for their Master and Friend. So His last words mean nothing to them. They are outside the circle in the upper room, out in the cold and the storm.

Yet to them He says, most gently, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." Ah! why not open the heart's door and let Jesus in.

Over and over let us repeat those last words of Jesus, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

"Oh, Master when Thou callest
No voice may say Thee nay.
For blest are those that follow
Where Thou dost lead the way.

"They who go forth to serve Thee,
We too, who serve at home,
May watch and pray together
Until Thy Kingdom come.

"In Thee for aye united
Our song of hope we raise,
Till that blest shore is sighted
Where all shall turn to praise."

THE END